

S K E T C H E S
OF THE
H I S T O R Y
OF THE
AUSTRIAN NETHERLANDS:
WITH
R E M A R K S
ON THE
CONSTITUTION, COMMERCE, ARTS,
AND GENERAL STATE OF
THESE PROVINCES.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of these Essays, having been led, during a pretty long stay in the Austrian Netherlands, to inquire as well into the antient history as into the present state of those Provinces, has thought that it might not be unacceptable to present these Views, though imperfect, of a Country, which of late has much engaged the public attention.

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SKETCHES OF THE HISTORY
OF THE
AUSTRIAN NETHERLANDS, &c.

SECTION I.

THE Low Countries, or Netherlands, so named from their low situation with respect to the higher land of Germany, are enclosed between France, Germany, and the Ocean. Of the seventeen Provinces contained in the Low Countries, which, antiently the rich possession of the house of Burgundy, were afterwards more completely united under the laws of the house of Austria, only the Provinces that are included in the Austrian Netherlands belong to the Prince who is the heir of those great houses. The Pro-

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vinces

vinces that may be said properly to compose the Austrian Netherlands are these: Flanders, Brabant, Mechlin, Haynault, Namur, Limburg, and Luxemburg. Gelderland, and the marquisate of Antwerp, are also ranked among the Austrian Provinces: but the marquisate of Antwerp has long since been incorporated with Brabant; and of Gelderland, shared between four different powers, only a slender and inconsiderable part now belongs to the house of Austria.

Even of those Provinces that properly compose the Austrian Netherlands, if we except the small province of Mechlin, which, besides the city of that name, contains only a few villages, and is enclosed on all sides by Brabant, not one province remains entire, and unimpaired, to that family whose name they bear. France, which has added Artois to her Monarchy, has also taken into her dominion a part of the adjacent countries of Flanders, Haynault,

nault, Namur, and Luxemburg. Holland, which has united seven, or more properly eight, provinces into her Republic, has likewise advanced her frontier into Flanders, Brabant, and Limburg.

The Austrian Netherlands, though thus dismembered, and though separated from the other States of the Low Countries, with which they were once united, are yet on many accounts worthy of regard. In antient times, these Provinces, by far the most considerable of the Low Countries, and distinguished by their opulence among the nations of Europe, were the early seats of commerce and of arts, which from thence were transplanted into other regions. In the present times, though declined from their antient greatness, they still exhibit the view of a fair and flourishing country, whose populousness can scarce be equalled in any part in Europe of the like extent, and whose state, already prosper-

ous, promises still to advance to higher prosperity.

The situation and fruitful soil of these countries, with the industrious character of the inhabitants, have in part contributed to their flourishing state; but the principal cause of their antient opulence, as well as of their present prosperity, is to be found in those privileges, and that liberty, which during so many centuries they have possessed. In this respect the Austrian Netherlands merit particular attention, that they have so long preserved a free constitution, not only in ages when these Provinces, independent States, were governed each by its own Sovereign, princes of no extensive power, but also in later times, when they have become the inheritance of mighty Monarchs, who in other parts of their wide dominion have ruled with absolute command.

SECTION II.

THE mighty Empire, which Charlemagne formed in the beginning of the ninth century, and which embraced so large a part of Europe, did not long maintain itself in the same extent under the successors of that Prince. In the Low Countries which composed a part of that Empire, Charlemagne had established Governors, who with the title of Duke, Marquis, or Count, ruled under him in the different provinces. During the reign of Charlemagne, and for some time after his death, while the reverence of his name lasted, those Governors kept themselves within the bounds of duty; but in succeeding times, when the reins of empire were slackened in the hands of his feeble descendants, and when the Empire that he had formed was weakened by its division

into distinct monarchies, the Governors in the Netherlands by degrees withdrew themselves from obedience, and, paying only vain marks of homage to the Kings of France and Germany, assumed to themselves, and transmitted to their descendants, the sovereignty of those Provinces which they had before governed only with a delegated sway. Thus arose the Dukes of Brabant, the Counts of Flanders and Haynault, and the other Princes of the Low Countries, already in the eleventh century possessed of independent power.

The Provinces of the Netherlands, which were thus formed into small and distinct Principalities, governed by their respective Sovereigns, preserved that form for some ages ; and during that period were acquired those important privileges, which have since remained to the Austrian Netherlands. The Princes of these countries, that they might the better maintain their new acquired

quired authority, admitted to a share of their power the Nobles, and the Prelates or Abbots, who possessed the largest part of the lands. The People, depressed at first in the Netherlands, as in other countries of Europe in that age, yet soon rose here into consideration. Collected in cities, they betook themselves to commerce, for which their situation was favourable, and to arts, to which their genius was well adapted. The Princes became sensible of the advantages that they might derive from the commercial spirit of their subjects, and encouraged their industry by numerous privileges. The People readily admitted the Princes to a share of their wealth; but, whilst they bestowed their riches, secured to themselves in return new franchises and immunities. Thus by degrees a free constitution was formed. The Cities increasing in inhabitants, and not easily controuled by Princes whose dominions were

of small extent, became as it were small Republics, that were governed by their own Magistrates, and whose voice had a mighty influence in the State. Liberty spread itself from the Cities into the Country. The pride of the Nobles was restrained; the power of the Prince was circumscribed; and the tyranny of the feudal system disappeared sooner in these countries than in most parts of Europe.

The wealth and greatness of the Provinces kept pace with the privileges acquired by the People. So early as in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when most nations of Europe, and England in particular, were destitute of trade or industry, commerce and manufactures flourished in the Netherlands, and proved to that country a plentiful source of riches. Above all, these Provinces, now known by the name of the Austrian Netherlands, were distinguished by their industry and
opu-

opulence. Flanders and Brabant were filled with large and crowded cities, the abodes of wealthy merchants and busy artisans. The woven fabrics of Louvain, of Ypres, and other cities, employed the labour of multitudes, and drew into this country the gold of distant nations. Bruges was noted for its commerce, and the principal traffic of Europe was carried on at its port. Ghent surpassed all the cities of the Low Countries in extent and populousness. The riches that flowed into this region from the traffic and ingenuity of the people, were far greater than might be conceived from the rude state of Europe in those ages. The gold acquired by merchandise was employed in the improvement of the lands, and Agriculture made here its earliest and most vigorous advances. The Princes of the Netherlands, while their power was limited by the privileges which they had bestowed, found their importance

portance increase by the splendor of their cities, and the wealth of their subjects.

In the beginning of the fifteenth century, a remarkable æra in the history of the Netherlands, all the Provinces of the Low Countries, with a small exception, were, from various causes, and by various means, united under the dominion of the Dukes of Burgundy, a younger branch of the royal family of France. These opulent and flourishing Provinces, which seemed to have been destined by their situation to form one Monarchy, now united under the same Government, formed to the Dukes of Burgundy the richest domain in Europe. The Court of these Princes displayed a magnificence that was not equalled in the Courts of Kings : their alliance was sought by the greatest Monarchs ; and they were often able to controul the power of the elder branch of their family, the Kings of France,

France. Under the Princes of this house, the Provinces of the Netherlands, knit together in union, and pursuing their arts of industry, attained to a greater degree of prosperity than in any former period. Their appearance at this time was so flourishing, that it was likened by a celebrated Historian* of that age, to the plenty of the Land of Promise. The privileges of the People, the foundation of their opulence, were respected. If instances occur, in which the Sovereign, now become a powerful Prince, may seem to have shewn too slight a regard to these privileges, these acts were transient, and wrought no great effect, and were compensated by a general care to advance the interests of the People.

The marriage of Mary of Burgundy, in the end of the fifteenth century, to the Archduke Maximilian, carried the rich in-

* Philip de Commines.

heritance of the Dukes of Burgundy into the house of Austria. This house, which had for some time possessed the Imperial dignity, but which had yet reached no high degree of power, acquired a great elevation from the possession of the Low Countries, which this fortunate marriage bestowed; and having not long after, by another fortunate marriage, acquired the great Monarchy of Spain, that family suddenly became the first power of Europe, possessing a greater extent of dominion than had belonged to any Empire, since the days of Charlemagne*. Under the first Princes of the line of Austria, Maximilian, Philip the Fair, and Charles the Fifth, the Low Countries, maintained in their privileges, continued in a state no less prosperous than under the Dukes of Burgundy.

* This good fortune of Austria gave occasion to the famous distich,

Bella gerant alii, tu felix Austria nube;
Nam quæ Mars aliis, fert tibi regna Venus.

If

If the beginning of the reign of Maximilian was troubled by tumults, the public peace was soon restored by the prudence of that Prince. The commerce of the Flemings was extended by the discovery of that New World, of which so large a part belonged to their sovereigns. The glory of Antwerp arose, and surpassed that of Bruges. That part of the Low Countries, which had not fallen under the dominion of the house of Burgundy, was gained by the Austrian Princes*. The Netherlands, though now a small part of a mighty Monarchy, yet considerable by their industry and opulence, engaged the attention, and often enjoyed the presence, of their Princes. The Emperor Charles the Fifth, who was born at Ghent, viewed these Provinces with a particular favour, and applied his care to the improvement of

* Utrecht, with Overijssel, and Groningen, the sovereignty of the Bishop of Utrecht.

the Netherlands, which he gladly visited, and whose natives possessed a high share of his confidence.

On the abdication of Charles the Fifth, the powerful house of Austria was divided into two branches, the Spanish and the German branches. Spain with the States in Italy and the Indies descended to Philip the Second, the son of that Prince; and the Low Countries were united to this great Monarchy. Austria, and the States in Germany, with the Imperial dignity, passed to the brother of Charles, the Emperor Ferdinand, who possessed also Hungary and Bohemia, and whose descendants were destined at last to reap the succession, though diminished, of the Low Countries.

With the reign of Philip the Second commence the disasters of those Provinces, that had flourished so long, and the invasion of those privileges which so many Princes had respected; an invasion which wrought

wrought almost the entire fall of the Spanish Monarchy, whilst it drew manifold calamities on the Netherlands. The doctrines of the Reformed Religion having spread into the Low Countries, and the severe edicts by which Philip sought to suppress this heresy, as it was called, having excited insurrections; that Prince, prompted by a tyrannic spirit and by religious bigotry, determined to enlarge the bounds of his authority in the Netherlands, and to reduce the People to a compliance with his will by force of arms. A powerful army passed from Spain into the Low Countries, under the Duke of Alva, a fit instrument of despotism. All the antient privileges of the Provinces were then openly violated. New Courts of Justice were erected, and Nobles were condemned by that tribunal, fitly named the Council of Blood. Odious taxes were imposed, and were levied by ways repugnant to the Constitution.

tion. The tyranny of Spain was introduced in place of the mild government of the Netherlands, whilst the unrelenting Inquisition exercised her dark and severe persecution. The inhabitants of the Low Countries, roused by repeated injuries, took up arms to defend their privileges, and conspired in a general revolt from the authority of Spain.

Then ensued those memorable wars of the Netherlands, in the sixteenth century, so well known in the history of Europe. The spirit of a people animated with the love of liberty, prevailed against the tyranny of Philip; but the event of the contest was not the same in all the Provinces. Whilst the Northern Provinces, more zealously attached to the Reformed Religion, and determined to admit no conciliation with Spain, formed that confederacy from which arose the Republic of Holland; those Provinces that now com-
pose

pose the Austrian Netherlands, with the Province of Artois, more devoted to the Catholic faith, and gained by the prudence of the Prince of Parma, or subdued by his arms, after a war of twenty years, returned again into the obedience of Philip: but, when they consented to obey, they stipulated also, that all those privileges, which had been transmitted through so many ages, should be restored in their full extent, and for the future should be preserved inviolate; a condition to which Philip, now fallen from his pride, willingly acceded. A mighty change was then wrought in the Low Countries. That union which the Provinces of Burgundy had formed in joining the Provinces of the Netherlands into one dominion, was dissolved; and a lasting separation took place between the Northern Provinces, or the Republic of Holland, and the Southern Provinces, which now reconciled to Spain,

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and establishing the Catholic religion, began to be distinguished by the name of the Spanish, or Catholic, Netherlands. Philip having gained this part of the revolted Provinces, unwisely diverted the arms of the Prince of Parma from the pursuit of his conquests in the Low Countries, and exhausted in vain enterprises against England and France, those treasures and forces which might have been more successfully employed to reduce that part of the Netherlands which refused to own his authority.

The reign of Albert and Isabella succeeded in the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Provinces, which had returned to the obedience of Spain, were for some time dismembered from that Monarchy, to form a distinct Sovereignty; and the two branches of the house of Austria were united, to give to this State its Sovereign. An interval of peace, during the reign of these

these Princes, composed a little the state of those countries, convulsed by long war.

After the death of Albert and Isabella, the Catholic Provinces, that had formed their principality in the Netherlands, were re-united to Spain, and remained a part of that Monarchy under Philip the Fourth, and Charles the Second; the last Princes of the Austrian line that sat on the throne of Spain. Under these Princes, their subjects in the Netherlands were not disturbed in the enjoyment of their privileges; and by their fidelity to their Sovereigns they merited well that distinction: but, whilst in the possession of their privileges, they retained a strong pledge of public safety. Many circumstances conspired, during this period, to reduce the Catholic Provinces to a depressed and decaying state. The wars, begun in the reign of Philip the Second, had inflicted a deep wound on these countries. In that contest, their richest and most com-

mercial cities had been plundered, many of the inhabitants had carried their wealth and industry into other lands; and when this part of the Netherlands returned to the obedience of Spain, and established the Catholic worship, a still greater migration had ensued. These disasters were aggravated by other distresses during the reigns of Philip the Fourth and Charles the Second. Holland, whose infant republic had acquired great strength from the Flemings, who migrated into her States, now lifted up to mighty power, and gaining an entire triumph over Spain, after a war of eighty years, not only effected her own independency, but was able also to impose hard terms upon the Spanish Provinces in the Low Countries. By the treaty of Munster, the bounds of these Provinces were diminished, their commerce was restrained, and Antwerp felt deeply the jealousy of her fortunate rival, Amsterdam.

France,

France, rising to greatness under a young and aspiring Prince; and intent on humbling the house of Austria, declared war against Spain; and turned the force of her arms against the dominions of Spain in the Low Countries. A flourishing part of that dominion was reduced under the power of Louis the Fourteenth; and the Spanish Netherlands, so long harassed by war, became again the scene of continual wars, kindled by that powerful and ambitious monarch. Spain, sinking and exhausted, drew her Provinces along with her in her fall; and the ill management of the affairs of that kingdom, under weak princes and ministers, extended itself to her States in the Low Countries, where the administration was trusted to rulers feeble and unskilled in the arts of government†. Amidst these com-

† Don Inigo de Velasco, Constable of Castile, ruled the Spanish Low Countries for some time during this period. This Governor passed his time in playing on the harpsichord,

complicated disasters, the Catholic Provinces experienced a fatal decline. Commerce and the Arts withdrew to shores where they were more cherished, and less disturbed; the Cities, deserted, shewed only in their wide extent the remains of their former greatness; the People were dispirited; and whilst the Provinces of Holland, formerly the most inconsiderable in the Low Countries, attained an uncommon elevation, the Spanish Netherlands fell from their antient prosperity into an humiliating weakness and decline.

Charles the Second, King of Spain, having long languished, died in the first year of the present century; and with him ended the race of the Austrian Princes who had filled the Spanish throne. The death of Charles the Second gave rise to a war that became general in Europe; whilst the
and conversing with his dwarfs. To those who were impertinent enough to trouble him with state affairs, he was accustomed to say, that they had a mind to kill him.

younger

younger branch of the house of Austria, that traced back its descent to the Emperor Ferdinand, brother of Charles the Fifth, and that had retained the Imperial dignity in Germany, asserted its title to the possessions of the elder branch of its family against the house of Bourbon, whose pretensions were fortified by the will of Charles the Second. The Spanish Netherlands, now uncertain what master they were to obey, became the theatre of a long war, in which Britain, with success and glory to her arms, strove to maintain the rights of the house of Austria against the pretensions of France. The victories of Ramillies, Oudenarde, Malplaquet, record the successes of Britain at this time in these Provinces, and the important services which she rendered to her ally.

The treaty of Utrecht, which restored the tranquillity of Europe, gave the Spanish possessions in the Low Countries

to the German branch of the house of Austria; and these Provinces, now taking the name of the Austrian Netherlands, passed under the dominion of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, to whose descendants they have since remained. Under the German Princes, this country, which had been harassed during almost two centuries by continual wars, has enjoyed the blessings of peace with little interruption. On the death of Charles the Sixth, the last male sovereign of the house of Austria, the possessions of that monarch descending to his daughter, the Princess Maria Theresa, married to Francis Duke of Lorraine; the ambition of many princes in Europe, and among others of Louis XV. King of France, who aspired to share the rich inheritance of the house of Austria, kindled a war, that extended itself to the Austrian Netherlands, and in which Britain, supporting the rights of a magnanimous princess, combated
again,

again, though with less success, the arms of France in the Low Countries. The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle composed this war, which was of no long continuance, and gave to these Provinces a tranquillity that has not since been disturbed. By the continuance of long peace under Charles VI. and the Empress Maria Theresa, combined with the cares of a more vigilant government, and with that free constitution which has been maintained, a happy revolution has been wrought in the affairs of the Austrian Netherlands. Since the peace of Utrecht, but more particularly since the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, even amidst the hard restraints which the jealousy or ambition of neighbouring powers has imposed, this country has made rapid advances to improvement of every kind. That languor, which from many disastrous events had overspread this part of the Netherlands, gives way to a rising spirit of industry, that carries its activity

tivity on all sides. The Arts occupy again a people noted of old for their ingenuity: the Cities assume a more animated appearance: Agriculture flourishes, and Commerce returns to visit these regions, her early seat.

To the Empress Maria Theresa has succeeded her son, the Emperor Joseph II. In this prince, in whom the illustrious house of Lorraine, that ruled so long on the borders of the Low Countries, is united to the house of Austria, commences properly a new family, the family of Austria-Lorraine. The felicity of this country has gained no small accession under this monarch, whose attention has been happily turned towards this antient possession of his family; and many signal benefits rendered to the Austrian Netherlands, have distinguished the reign of Joseph II.

SECTION

SECTION III.

THE Austrian Netherlands are composed of Provinces, which in antient times, governed each by its own sovereign, formed independent States, and possessed distinct laws and a distinct government. These Provinces, united in later times under the dominion of the same sovereign, have yet retained their original independence on each other, and preserved their particular laws and constitution, acknowledging their prince by no other title than that which belongs to him as the sovereign of each distinct State, Duke of Brabant, Lord of Mechlin, Count of Flanders or Namur. Though the constitution of these States is not in all respects the same, yet as they have had the
same

same original, and are founded on the same principles, a general resemblance may be found in the constitution of all.

Among the Provinces of the Low Countries, Brabant has always held the pre-eminence. The Dukes of Brabant, in ancient times, under the successors of Charlemagne, seem to have exercised an authority over the Princes of many of the other Provinces, from which these Princes gradually withdrew themselves, as they became more powerful. When the Low Countries were united under one dominion, Brabant became the seat of government, and the residence of the Sovereign. When the General Assembly of the States of the Provinces was convoked, the first place and voice belonged to the Deputies of Brabant. In tracing some of the principal lines of the constitution of Brabant, we may behold the main lines of the constitution of these Provinces.

The

The great charter of the liberties of this Province is named the Blythe or Joyous Entry of Brabant†; so named because the Sovereign, when he enters on his government, binds himself by an oath to govern according to this great charter, on which are founded the happiness and security of his subjects. The Joyous Entry may be regarded as a compact between the Prince and the People. The rights and privileges claimed by the People are expressed in numerous articles, and the conditions are declared on which the People consent to yield obedience, and on which the Prince is willing to reign. In this great instrument of liberty, the powers of the States of the Province are ascertained; the constitution of the tribunals and courts of justice is determined; the magistrates and great officers of the State are described; the general rights and franchises of all the citi-

† Blyde Inkomste van Brabant.

zens are recited in many important particulars; even their exercises and amusements are not omitted. A remarkable clause is added, that if the Sovereign shall infringe any article of the Joyous Entry, his subjects shall be released from service and duty until due reparation be made †.

The Joyous Entry was obtained in those early times, when Brabant, yet a separate State, was governed by its own princes, the Dukes of Brabant: some important additions were afterwards gained under the Princes of Burgundy and Austria. The Sovereigns of this State, during a long course of ages, have, at the beginning of their reign, entered into solemn engagements to govern according to the Joyous Entry. These engagements are made publicly at Brussels at the inauguration of the prince, and in pre-

† The Prince of Orange availed himself of this privilege of Brabant, in his declaration against Philip II.

fence of the States of the Province. The ceremonies that accompany this solemn act, are such as recall to the prince the natural equality of men, and the conditions on which a free people are willing to admit the rule of a sovereign.

The States form an essential and important part of the constitution of Brabant, and a great support of its liberty. The States are composed of the three orders, the Clergy, the Nobles, and the Third Estate, as it is called, or the Commons. Two prelates and eleven abbots form the order of the Clergy, which is esteemed the first order in the States. The Nobles make the second order. The entry into the States is not open to all without distinction who are noble by birth, nor is it in the power of the prince to introduce those whom he ennobles into this assembly. The Nobles who enter into the States, must exhibit proofs that their family has been noble during four descents on both sides,
and

and must also possess estates in Brabant of a certain yearly value in proportion to their rank, as Duke, Count, or Baron. The Nobles that enter into the States, according to this description, do not exceed at present the number of thirty. The Third Estate, or the Commons, are represented by deputies chosen from the magistrates of the three principal cities of Brabant, Brussels, Louvain, and Antwerp. These representatives are in all seven. Antiently other cities in Brabant have exercised their right of sending representatives also.

The States are assembled at Brussels. It is the important privilege of the States, that no tax can be imposed, or subsidy granted, without their consent and authority. The care with which the constitution has provided, that the gift of public money should not be too rashly made, deserves to be remarked. When the Sovereign requires a subsidy, his requisition is presented to the
States

States in the respectful form of a petition. The States deliberate ; and the Clergy, and the Nobles, if they give their consent, consent in these terms, “ provided that the Third Estate shall also consent.” But the Deputies of the cities can give no consent, till they have collected the sense of the cities which they represent. For this purpose, in each of the three principal cities is assembled the great Chamber of the City, composed, as at Brussels, of the Magistrates, of the antient Council, consisting of those who have formerly been Magistrates, and of the Rulers, or Deans, as they are called, of the Communities of Arts and Trades, which are divided into nine bands or nations. To this assembly, which is numerous, the Deputies report the request of the Prince, and the consent of the Clergy and Nobles. The Chamber deliberates on this proposition, and the plurality of voices decides ; though this constitution partakes so largely

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of

of the republican spirit, that it has sometimes been contended, that the consent of the Chamber is not duly obtained unless the voices are unanimous. The Deputies make their report to the States ; and if the three principal cities are unanimous in their consent, the subsidy is granted ; but their common consent is required. With such care the constitution of Brabant has provided, that the People shall not be too rashly loaded with oppressive taxes, and that the Representatives of the Commons shall not be too lavish and complaisant in their grant of public money. When the subsidy is granted, it still belongs to the States to impose and collect the taxes that are to yield this subsidy ; and these taxes are not to be imposed unequally, or arbitrarily, but shared among the different parts of the province, according to a just and determined proportion.

Personal

Personal liberty and security, as well as property, are well guarded by the constitution of Brabant. No arbitrary mandate can deprive a citizen of his liberty : his dwelling is sacred : if he is suspected of a crime, the officers of justice are not permitted to enter his house for the purpose of apprehending him, unless two magistrates are present. He cannot be detained in prison without just cause : within a short and limited space after his confinement, he has a right to call on his judges, that they may determine whether there are sufficient grounds for his detention. No foreign jurisdiction has any power over him. The Joyous Entry declares, that no native of Brabant shall be drawn out of his own province, to appear before the tribunal of another country ; neither can he be tried by any other than his natural judges, and those tribunals, which the laws of Brabant have appointed.

In the cities, the Magistrates are the judges. The Magistrates of the cities are commonly named by the Sovereign, but are named from a list of three for each Magistrate presented by the city. Sometimes the choice is limited, as at Brussels, where the seven Magistrates, who act as judges, are to be taken among the descendants of seven honourable families, antiently seated in that city; a limitation that yet leaves a wide choice. The Magistrates of cities, distinguished by their rank and situation, and educated in the knowledge of the laws of the country, form a respectable tribunal, in which their fellow-citizens safely confide. That they may be the less suspected of undue attachment, the Joyous Entry excludes from the magistracy those who hold certain offices of profit and trust immediately under the Prince.

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In the country†, the Magistrates of the bourgs or villages are the judges. The Magistrates of bourgs or villages are named by the lord on whose manor the bourg or village is situated; but lest the administration of justice should be rashly trusted to unlettered judges, taken at will among the inhabitants of bourgs or villages, two lettered Magistrates, as they are styled, educated in the profession of the law, guide the determinations of this tribunal. The Joyous Entry, which has been vigilant in its care, that the chief employments of Brabant should be filled only by those who are born in the province, requires, that the Magistrates of cities, as well as of bourgs and villages, should be natives of Brabant, and should be sworn to maintain the provisions of this great charter of liberty.

† It is the distinction of cities, that they are walled and shut with gates. Bourgs and villages are open and without walls. The bourg is distinguished from the village only by its greater extent or populousness.

The Magistrates of cities, and the Magistrates of bourgs and villages, judge in civil as well as in criminal causes. In criminal causes their sentence is final, and cannot be reversed: in civil causes, there lies an appeal to the great tribunal of the Province, the Council of Brabant.

The Council of Brabant, the sovereign tribunal of the Province, took its origin under the first Dukes of Brabant, and afterwards received an increase of dignity under the Dukes of Burgundy. The Joyous Entry has by many articles regulated the constitution of this tribunal, which it has justly esteemed of high consequence to the liberties of the State. A President, named by distinction Chancellor of Brabant, and sixteen Judges compose this tribunal. The undue intrusion of strangers is guarded against with laudable jealousy. The Chancellor, if he is not a native of Brabant, must possess estates of a certain yearly value

value in the Province. The other judges, with the exception of two, must be natives of Brabant. The judges, in case of vacancy, are named by the Sovereign, out of a list presented by the Council of three counsellors learned in the laws for each judge, and when named are not to be displaced.

The jurisdiction of this tribunal, as a court of justice, is extensive. All civil causes that have been litigated before the Magistrates of cities and villages, may be heard by appeal in the Council of Brabant. Many causes also fall under the cognizance of this tribunal in the first instance; in particular, all accusation on the score of sedition and treason under its various branches. All who are of the rank of Noble, Magistrates, Counsellors, and others of the profession of the law, are subject to the jurisdiction of this court, in criminal as well as in civil causes. The sentence of this tribunal is final, and admits no appeal.

But the authority of the Council of Brabant is not confined to the administration of justice. The constitution has reposed an important trust with respect to legislation in this tribunal, which is an intermediate power placed between the Prince and the People. The States of Brabant do not concur with the Sovereign in enacting of laws, otherwise than by the remonstrances which they may address to him ; but the Joyous Entry ordains, that no edict or decree of the Sovereign shall obtain the force of a law in Brabant, till it has been examined and approved by the Judges of this tribunal, and subscribed by the Chancellor of Brabant. Thus the legislative power of the Prince, already limited by the provisions of the Joyous Entry, is still further limited by the controul which the constitution has placed in the Council of Brabant. In the edicts of the Prince that are submitted to

to this court, the Judges are bound to respect the dispositions of the Joyous Entry; and it is a part of their oath, that they shall subscribe no edict which is in opposition to this great charter.

The Council of Brabant, which exercise, this high charge with respect to legislation, in antient times possessed a still greater power. At the accession of the house of Burgundy, it was ordained, that when the Prince was absent from the Province, the government should be vested in the Council of Brabant. The jealousy which the State entertained of the powerful house of Burgundy, bestowed this important charge on the Council of Brabant; but that privilege has not remained.

This is a faint delineation of the constitution of Brabant, of the limits within which the power of the Sovereign is circumscribed, and of the privileges that the People

ple possess in some important articles. With such limited powers governed antiently the Dukes of Brabant and Burgundy, and with such limitations in later times have governed the Austrian Princes of Spain, or of Germany. This description agrees also in the most essential points with the constitution of the other Provinces, where the Prince binds himself also, at his inauguration, to govern according to the antient laws and usages, where the States possess the power of imposing and levying taxes, and where the People are in like manner judged by the Magistrates and the Council of the Province. Yet it is to be remarked, that the privileges of Brabant have been more accurately defined, and are more amply extended, than those of any other Province*.

The

* Strada relates, that pregnant women frequently passed from the other Provinces into Brabant, that their children

The Austrian Netherlands enjoy the benefit of that wise constitution which they have established and maintained. Governed according to their own laws, secured in their property and personal liberty, and charged only with moderate taxes imposed by themselves, the Flemings enjoy the best gifts of a free constitution; nor have they cause to repine, in comparing their situation with that of other countries, when

dren might partake the more extended privileges of that Province.

Among the particular privileges of Brabant, is to be mentioned that noted privilege granted by the Emperors, and named the Golden Bull of Brabant, by which it is forbidden to all Princes of the Empire, within or without their dominions, to exercise any jurisdiction over the natives of Brabant, unless justice should be denied by the Duke of Brabant. The Council of Brabant was entrusted with the execution of this Bull, and was empowered to put to the ban of the Empire any Prince who should venture to infringe it. An article was inserted in the treaty of Westphalia, to correct the abuses that had sprung from the Golden Bull of Brabant.

they

they behold around them either nations that are subject to arbitrary sway, or nations that, enjoying liberty, are yet oppressed with burthenfome taxes, from which these Provinces are happily exempted.

S E C.

SECTION IV.

FLANDERS, that Province, by whose name other nations commonly distinguish all those countries, as they bestow on their inhabitants in general the name of the Flemish, is the richest and most populous Province of the Austrian Netherlands. Flanders, noted for fruitful lands and numerous cities, spreads itself into a wide and extended plain, that is little interrupted by any eminence. The sea, which washes the shore of Flanders, has reared a rampart against itself, in hills of sand raised along the coast, and, as it is said, continues still to retire from those rich plains, which it formerly covered, though in ages beyond the reach of history. The noble river of the Scheld, which rising on the frontier of France,

France, takes its way through the Low Countries to the ocean, passes through Flanders, and, navigable in all its course through that Province, washes Tournay, Ghent, and other cities†. The Lys and other smaller rivers join their streams.

The Count of Flanders, from the power and opulence of his State, held a high place among the Princes of the Low Countries; the vassal, and one of the twelve Peers of France, and, like the other great vassals of that kingdom, often formidable to its Sovereigns; connected for the most part in intimate league with England, whose alliance supplied many advantages to the early industry of his subjects. The family of Burgundy, which, introduced into the Low Countries in the end of the fourteenth century, with so rapid a progress spread its

† Our English Poets have not succeeded well in describing the Scheld. One Poet has unjustly degraded this noble river, the Thames of those regions, by the appellation of the lazy Scheld, whilst another Poet not more happily has sung of the "rapid Scheld's descending wave."

sway, in little more than half a century, over almost all the Netherlands, and by whose title the house of Austria has since inherited these Provinces, first entered into the Low Countries by the Province of Flanders. Philip, the first Duke of Burgundy, and the fourth son of John, King of France, having married Margaret, the heiress of Flanders, daughter of Louis of Male, Count of Flanders, by virtue of that marriage acquired the Province of Flanders, and, with Flanders, Artois. The accession of these rich Provinces to the Burgundies, which had been bestowed on Philip by King John, his father, in reward of his valour displayed against the arms of Edward the Third, under the Black Prince, in the field of Poitiers, gave a great splendour to the new house of Burgundy, and soon drew along a wider dominion. Philip transmitted his States to his son John, surnamed Sans-Peur, or the Fearless, the second Duke

Duke of Burgundy; a prince memorable in the history of France by the influence which he acquired in the government, during the troubled reign of Charles the Sixth, when the enmity of the houses of Burgundy and Orleans divided that unhappy kingdom, and prepared the way for the successes of the English under Henry the Fifth.

Brabant, swelling into hills of a gentle ascent, presents a more diversified country than Flanders, as, in the greatest part of its extent, it yields little in fertility and populousness to that Province. The rivers of Brabant, the Senne, the Dyle, the Demer, on whose banks its antient cities are built, unite to form the Rupel, and pour their mingled streams into the Scheld, which, as it draws nearer to the sea, washing the walls of Antwerp, divides Flanders from Brabant. The Meuse, whose sources are in Lorraine, one of the noblest rivers of Europe, and navigable in a long course, having visited

sited many Provinces, bounds Brabant on the North, and in part on the East. The shout of the Brabanders of old, on the day of battle, gave to their Duke the title of the rich Duke; an appellation to which he was entitled, as well on account of his rich demefnes, as on account of the opulence of his cities.

Brabant makes it her boast to have been the original feat of the family of Charlemagne; that mighty monarch, who founded so vast an empire, out of whose ruins so many kingdoms and principalities have arisen. Under the successors of Charlemagne, the Dukes of Brabant for some time exercised an authority over a large part of the Low-Countries, with the title of Dukes of the Lower Lorraine, or Lothier. The title of Duke of Lothier, which still remains annexed to Brabant, recalls the memory of that antient dignity. Before the accession of the house of Burgundy, the house of
E Louvain,

Louvain, whose Counts were also Counts of Brussels, gave Dukes to Brabant for three centuries; a race of princes, distinguished as well by their martial as pacific virtues, and under whom were acquired those important privileges, that were afterwards the ramparts of liberty against the powerful house of Burgundy. The heiress of Flanders, by whose title that Province was obtained to the house of Burgandy, opened also to that family the entrance into Brabant, by her descent from the Dukes of Brabant. Antony, the second son of Philip the first Duke of Burgundy, and the brother of John, surnamed the Fearless, was first called to the succession of Brabant; and the race of Antony, who was slain at the battle of Agincourt, having soon failed, the inheritance of Brabant devolved to his nephew Philip, surnamed the Good, the third Duke of Burgundy; an able and fortunate prince,

prince, who united the largest part of the Netherlands under his command†.

Mechlin, with its small district, still claims the honour to be a distinct Province. The Lords of Mechlin antiently possessed a wider State, and were sometimes formidable to the Dukes of Brabant. A remarkable instance of this kind occurs in the twelfth century. Berthold, Lord of Mechlin, taking advantage of the tender years of Godfrey the Third, Duke of Brabant, who was

† The first Prince of the family of Louvain was Godfrey the Bearded; so named from a vow which he had made, that he would permit his beard to grow, till he had regained the antient rights of the Dukes of Brabant.

There is a whimsical remark, that the number three by some fatality swayed the house of Louvain, which reigned in Brabant for three centuries, and of whose Princes three in succession were named Godfrey, three were named Henry, and three were named John. The last Prince of this family left also three daughters. The eldest, Joanna, was married to Wencellaus, Duke of Luxemburg, who reigned with her in Brabant. The second, Margaret of Brabant, was married to Louis of Male, Count of Flanders; and from that marriage was derived the title by which the Dukes of Burgundy entered into Brabant.

yet an infant in the cradle, invaded Brabant, and laid waste the country around Bruffels. The Regent, who governed during the minority of Godfrey, drew together the force of Brabant to oppose the Lord of Mechlin, and a fierce contest ensued. When the engagement had been renewed two days, and victory was yet in suspense, the Regent on the third day, that he might encourage his troops, commanded that the cradle in which the young Duke was laid should be brought forth, and should be suspended from the boughs of a tree in the sight of the two armies. At this spectacle, the Brabanders were so animated, that they attacked the enemy with redoubled vigour, and gained a complete victory. A vale, where three fountains spring, not far from Bruffels, marks the place of this engagement. Godfrey afterwards, when he attained to manhood, made war on Berthold, taking the castles that belonged to him in
Brabant,

Brabant, and compelling Berthold to take an oath of fealty. Mechlin annexed to Flanders came, with that Province, into the hands of the Dukes of Burgundy.

Haynault takes its name from the river Haine, that washes Mons, its capital; a country varied with hill and vale, with woodland and open field, planted with many cities and numerous villages, and ranked among the most fruitful and populous Provinces of the Netherlands. The Counts of Haynault, Counts also of Holland, Zeland, and Friesland, were powerful princes in that age in which the Dukes of Burgundy entered into the Low-Countries, and added this State to their other dominions. Queen Isabel of England, and Edward her son, afterwards Edward the Third, whose history is so much mingled with that of the Netherlands, repaired to the Court of Haynault, at the time when the

Spensers, unworthy favourites, governed England under a weak Prince. Queen Isabel obtained here the succours that she sought. The Knights of Haynault, whose names and families still remain in this country, accompanied Edward into England, and by their arms contributed not a little to overthrow the Spensers, and place the young Prince on the throne. During his stay in Haynault, Edward became enamoured with the Princess Philippa, daughter of the Count of Haynault; a lady of a martial spirit, whom he took for his Queen. Afterwards, when Edward determined to set up his title to the crown of France, and undertook those wars more glorious to the arms of England, than advantageous to her State, he sought, by means of the Count of Haynault, to draw the Princes of the Low-Countries into his alliance. An Ambassador passed over from England to Haynault.

riault on that commission, in whose train, as Froissart relates, were English Knights who veiled one eye, according to a vow, which, in the spirit of chivalry of that age, they had made to their mistresses, ladies of England, thus to keep one eye covered, till they had wrought some notable exploit in arms against France. Edward and his Queen often resorted to the Netherlands. Their sons, Lionel, by whose title the house of York claimed the throne of England in the war of the two Roses, and John, commonly named John of Ghent, from whom sprang the royal branch of Lancaster, were born in that country.

The Province of Namur is high and mountainous, yet not unfruitful, and contains rich mines of lead, iron, and other metallic and mineral substances. The river Meuse, increased by the Sambre, waters this Province, and gives a communication with Holland and France. The

banks of the Meuse, rising in lofty and stupendous rocks, naked, or covered with thick woods, present a wild and romantic scenery. Villages climb up the sides of the rocks, and castles are seen that are built high upon the summit of the cliff. Hermitages and convents, suiting well with the rude and solemn appearance of the banks, present themselves in solitary spaces. Between these picturesque scenes the Meuse keeps a smooth and gentle course. The good fortune of the house of Burgundy drew an advantage from the prodigal humour and necessities of the Count of Namur, to gain the possession of that Province. The Count of Namur, the Lord of a Province not the most opulent, having exhausted his revenue in vain expences, was constrained to sell his principality to Philip the Good, with this stipulation, that he should retain the sovereignty during his life.

Limburg,

Limburg, a land of green pastures, is situated beyond the Meuse. This Province was governed antiently by its own Dukes. In the thirteenth century, the Duke of Limburg dying without male issue, the succession was disputed between the Dukes of Brabant and Luxemburg. The chance of war, and the battle of Woring, famous in the annals of Brabant, decided in favour of the Duke of Brabant. Solemn festivals, and monuments that still remain at Brussels, celebrated this great victory, which gave a large accession to Brabant. A Poet of that age and country dedicates his poem, entitled *The War of Woring*, to a Princess of England, daughter of Edward the 1st, married to John the 1st, Duke of Brabant, that in learning the Flemish language, as he expresses himself, she might also become acquainted with the gallant deeds of that family into which she had entered. Since that time, the Province

vince of Limburg, though it retains its distinct assembly of States, has remained strictly united to Brabant, and the privileges of the Joyous Entry have been alike extended to both countries. Limburg passed with Brabant under the sway of the house of Burgundy.

Luxemburg is the most extensive, but the least fruitful, and least populous, Province of the Austrian Netherlands; presenting in its wide bounds many rude mountains, under whose surface are yet concealed valuable mines. The feudal vassalage, and the tyranny of the great Lords, remained long in this Province, not happily situated for commerce, and containing few large cities. The Moselle, whose banks supply the only vineyards that are found in the Netherlands, washes the Province of Luxemburg. The Ardennes, that great forest, which formerly from the banks of the Moselle extended itself over the Low-Countries

Countries as far as to the shores of the Ocean, and of whose woods there are still many remains in these regions, retain their antient name in the Province of Luxemburg, and overspread a great part of its extent. The Ardennes gave the first title to the Princes of Luxemburg, who antiently were stiled Counts of the Ardennes. Among the Princes of Luxemburg is renowned that Prince in the fourteenth century, by right of marriage also King of Bohemia, who fought against the English in the field of Cressy. Froissart relates of this Prince, that, having lost his sight, he commanded his Knights to lead him into the hottest part of the combat, where he might be sure to strike a blow with effect. His Knights obeyed his commands, fastening together the reins of his horse and of their own horses, that they might not be separated from him by the croud. When the fight was ended, the Prince, who had

had advanced far into the English ranks, was found lifeless on the field, with his band of faithful Knights slain around him, the reins of their horses still fastened together. The house of Luxemburg attained afterwards to great consideration in Germany. Among the illustrious families of Europe, whose Princes were advanced to the Empire, from the failure of the race of Charlemagne, till the imperial crown became as it were hereditary in the family of Austria, the house of Luxemburg forms one dynasty. The Province of Luxemburg came to the family of Burgundy from the cession of its sovereign Elizabeth. That Princess, assailed by her kinsmen, Princes of Saxony, who disputed her title, and unable to maintain her dominion, transferred her rights to Philip the Good, who was better able to support them. A revenue was stipulated by Elizabeth, as the price of the cession of her State ;

State ; but the Duke of Burgundy did not duly fulfil his engagements to this Princess, who retired to Triers, where she ended her life in great obscurity.

Gelderland can scarce be accounted an Austrian Province. Of that large country, watered by the Rhine and Meuse, and with which is incorporated Zutphen, also one of the Seventeen Provinces, only a small district in the higher Gelderland, containing the city of Ruremond, belongs to the house of Austria. Gelderland, last of these Provinces, fell under the power of the house of Burgundy, annexed by Charles the Bold, son of Philip the Good. The title by which this Province was acquired, reflects honour on Charles the Bold. Arnold, Duke of Gelderland, that he might shew his gratitude to that Prince by whom he had been relieved from the persecution of his unnatural son Adolphus, by his will bequeathed Gelderland and Zutphen to
Charles,

Charles, excluding Adolphus and his descendants from any part of the succession. The son of Adolphus did not tamely submit to a will, by which he was excluded from the patrimony of his ancestors*.

A remarkable distinction prevails between the Provinces of the Austrian Netherlands,

* The fifteenth century, in which the Low-Countries were drawn into one dominion by the house of Burgundy, is memorable in Europe by the union of Principalities, and the aggrandisement of Monarchies. The different Kingdoms in Spain were then united into one powerful Monarchy under Ferdinand and Isabella: the great fiefs of France were annexed to the crown by Louis the XIth and Charles the VIIIth: the house of Austria, that reaped the fruits of the ambition of the Dukes of Burgundy, and of the policy of Ferdinand the Catholic, completed the fabric of its greatness at the close of the century. Europe, which had been divided into small Sovereignities, since the fall of the empire of Charlemagne, now formed into great Monarchies, assumed a new appearance. The fall of the great Barons in the war of the two Roses, gave occasion to Henry the Seventh at this time also to enlarge the regal power, and to advance England nearer to an equality with the great Monarchies that arose on the continent.

The aspect of Europe in the eighteenth century may be thought to indicate the aggrandisement of the powerful Monarchies, and the dissolution of the smaller States.

that

that some are properly Flemish, while others are known by the name of Walloon Provinces. The difference of language gives rise to this distinction. The Walloon tongue, which is spoken in the Provinces that bear that name, essentially different from the Flemish language, spoken in the other Provinces, is that ancient French language, which arose out of the ruins of the Latin tongue in the age of Charlemagne, and was spoken in France, as well as in the Walloon Low-Countries, in the ages succeeding the reign of that monarch. This old language was named Romance, or Gaulois ; and from the word Gaulois, corrupted into Wallois, has arisen the name Walloon. Whilst France, by gradual refinement, has improved the old Gaulois into that softer and more elegant tongue, which is now spoken in that kingdom, the Walloon Provinces in the Low-Countries

Countries have retained their antient language, more rude, but in its rudeness bold and energetic.

Haynault and Namur, with Artois, now no longer an Austrian Province, compose the Walloon Country. The Walloon name and language are also extended into the adjacent districts of the neighbouring Provinces. A large part of Brabant, where that Province borders on Haynault and Namur, is named the Walloon Brabant. The affinity of language seems also on some occasions to have wrought a nearer relation. In the wars kindled by the tyranny of Philip the Second, the Walloon Countries, more attached to the antient religion, first separated themselves from the other Provinces, and, embracing the terms proposed by the Prince of Parma, were reconciled to Spain. The Walloon troops, drawn from Provinces where commerce was less generally

rally practised, and whose territory, bordering on France, had often been the seat of war, were noted for their martial spirit, and composed afterwards the flower of the armies of Philip.

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SECTION V.

AT Bruges, and at Antwerp, are still to be seen the monuments of that ancient traffic which flourished in those cities.

While the Flemings, possessed with a commercial spirit, and encouraged by their Princes, were led to trace the seas at an early time, that industry which soon grew up in their country, with the protection that was bestowed on traffic, drew also the traders of other nations to the shore of Flanders*. Bruges in the fourteenth century

* The early attention of the Princes of this country to commerce, appears from many instances. In the eleventh century, the Duke of Brabant waged war with the Count of Holland, on account of a fortress which the Hollander had built on the banks of the Meuse, where Dordrecht now stands, by which the traffic of the Brabanders with Britain was obstructed. In the twelfth century, Henry the

tury was the principal mart of Europe. The fortunate situation of that city conspired with other circumstances to render it the center of commerce in that age. The merchants of Venice deposited at Bruges the rich commodities of Italy and the Levant, while the traders of the Hanse Cities transported thither the ruder productions of the North. Bruges holding a middle place between the nations of Northern and Southern Europe that first applied themselves to commerce, and supplying a free port, the traders from the shores of the Baltic, and the Mediterranean, chose rather to store their merchandise in the warehouses of Bruges, than to undertake long voyages in an age in the First, Duke of Brabant, obtained for the merchants of his country an exemption from duties through the course of the Rhine, and afterwards through all the bounds of Germany. The Counts of Flanders, in their treaties with England, seldom failed to stipulate articles favourable to the commerce of their subjects.

which navigation was as yet so imperfect. This city attained its height of commercial fame under the Dukes of Burgundy. Most European nations had at that time their Consuls residing at Bruges, where the houses are still shewn that they inhabited. In the end of the fifteenth century, when the Low-Countries first passed under the power of the Austrian Princes, the peace of Flanders being much shaken by intestine tumult, Bruges began to decline, and the seat of commerce was transported to Antwerp. That city of Brabant, augmented by the decay of Bruges, and happily seated on the banks of a navigable river, whose deep and capacious bed supplied a port for vessels of the greatest burden, soon became so eminent in trade, and attracted so much the resort of merchants, that, in the phrase of a writer† of that

† Guicciardini.

age, Antwerp, where all languages were spoken, seemed to be the common city of all nations. The Scheld was covered with numerous fleets, that kept their course to this celebrated port; and the multitude of ships was so great, that vessels were long detained, before they could approach to the quays to discharge their rich freight. A New World added to the Old increased the commerce of this city, which supplied the principal articles of traffic with the new-discovered regions. The English, who in that age had made only feeble essays in commerce in which they have since so much excelled, and whose ships scarce visited any ports besides those of the Netherlands, had established a factory at Antwerp. Those quays and canals so fitly constructed for trade, that exchange which gave to London the model of a like building, and that magnificent structure built for the reception of the Easterlings, so the

merchants from the Baltic were named, recall to memory the ancient pride of this commercial city.

The reign of the Emperor Charles the Fifth was the æra of the splendor of Antwerp. The inauspicious reign of Philip the Second wrought a fatal change. Pillaged by the Spanish soldiery, besieged afterwards by the Prince of Parma, and deserted by many of the inhabitants when reduced by the arms of that Prince, Antwerp declined fast, and by her decay added to the rising greatness of Amsterdam. But the entire overthrow of the commerce of Antwerp was reserved for the reign of Philip the Fourth, and the treaty of Munster. In that treaty, Holland, triumphant in arms, gave the law; and that republic, now beholding these Provinces from which she was separated with the eye of a jealous and imperious rival, and aspiring to secure to her own ports all commerce in the Low-Countries,

Countries, extorted this concession from the weakness of Spain, That Antwerp, whose competition she dreaded, should no longer hold any communication with the Ocean by the navigation of the Scheld. Thus the boasted port of Antwerp was rendered vain: the numerous branches by which the Scheld discharges itself into the sea, seized to the sole dominion of Holland, were no longer open to the vessels of other nations, nor gave to the ships of Antwerp a passage to the main. The commerce of this city, languishing before, was now at once extinguished; her exchange was forsaken, her warehouses were empty; and the Scheld, formerly visited by numerous fleets, now wasted no other vessels to her port, besides trading barks from the rivers and canals of Holland.

The fall of Antwerp gave a mighty blow to the commerce of the Austrian Netherlands; whilst Holland, remembering the

antient celebrity of Bruges, extended also her jealousy to that city. The calamities that ensued, and the weak government of Spain, added to the decline of trade. The commerce of the Flemings, which had been so flourishing under the first Austrian Princes, sunk almost entirely at the close of the last century, under the last Princes of that house who filled the throne of Spain.

Since the sovereignty has been transported to the Austrian Princes of the German line, the commercial spirit, though repressed by many difficulties, has revived by slow degrees. Not long after the accession of the German Sovereigns, an attempt was made to animate the languishing traffic of this country, by opening a trade to the East Indies; and a company was erected at Ostend, the principal port of the Austrian Flanders, by the authority of the Imperial Court, for the purpose of prosecuting

cuting that commerce. The jealousy of Holland, infusing into England and other nations a like jealousy of the Company of Ostend, defeated this undertaking in its infancy, and excluded the Catholic Netherlands from all commerce with that Asiatic region, which to Holland herself had opened such stores of wealth. Though, by this exclusion, a new restraint was added to the former restraints imposed on traffic, yet the natives of the Austrian Provinces, enjoying the sweets of long peace, and aided by a more active Government, have sought to avail themselves of the advantages that still remain for the prosecution of commerce. Inhabiting a fruitful region, whose coast is washed by the Ocean, and which, formerly abounding in manufactures, is yet not destitute of them, they have thought that they might justly aspire to partake, in some degree, the benefits of traffic, although the competition of many powerful

powerful nations, who, since the declension of this country, have entered into the career of commerce, forbids them ever to aspire to that eminence which they formerly possessed.

But the progress of commerce has been chiefly forwarded by the cares of the present Sovereign, and by the events of his reign. When this Prince succeeded to the sovereignty, the Austrian Netherlands enjoyed a profound peace, while the commercial Powers in their neighbourhood were engaged in sharp war. This favourable moment was not lost. The respect that was paid to the Imperial colours, while the flags of other nations were molested, encouraged the Flemings to engage in more extensive enterprises of trade. At the same time Ostend was declared a free port. The vessels of all countries were induced to carry their merchandise to this port, which became a staple of commerce; and a large
part

part of the traffic of the nations that were at war, was carried on under Imperial colours, and by the port of Ostend. The harbour of that city was enlarged, that it might contain the numerous vessels by which it was visited; and the walls were extended, that habitations might be found for the numerous strangers who crowded thither from all parts.

From this favourable conjuncture a great advantage has accrued to commerce. Though the war which engaged the neighbouring powers has now ceased, yet that traffic which the shore of Flanders had attracted during the continuance of the war, has not disappeared. The minds of men, turned to mercantile pursuits, and animated by gain, keep on the same course. Ostend, though now less resorted to, yet retaining the privileges of a free port, contains numerous ships in her harbour. The traffic of the Austrian Netherlands embraces a wider sphere.

sphere. A commercial intercourse is opened with the American States, whose trade is no longer confined to Britain. If, by the jealousy of Holland, the Flemings have been excluded from a direct commerce with the East Indies, yet Trieste, situated in the dominions of their Sovereign, on the Gulph of the Adriatic, affords an opportunity of trading from that port to the rich coasts of Asia. The shores of Africa are also visited by the ships of this country; and the Flemings pursue on that coast the same unhallowed traffic, which other European nations have so long practised without scruple.

Whilst trade has advanced in the Austrian Provinces, and has gathered strength from the encouragement of the Sovereign, the inhabitants have called to mind the benefit that their country formerly derived from the Scheld, and feel sensibly the disadvantages that arise from the obstructed navigation

tion of that river. The shores of Flanders, on account of shallows and banks of sand, are dangerous to the mariner. Sluys, the ancient port of Bruges, yielded up to Holland, has long been lost to these Provinces. The port of Ostend, little known when this country was in most prosperous state, but now the principal port of Austrian Flanders, improved with much labour and expence, is yet liable to inconveniences that it may not perhaps be practicable to remove. While commodious ports or havens are thus wanting, the Flemings have recollected the advantages of that river, which admits the vessels from the ocean by a safe entrance into its bed, and which, in its capacious channel, supplies to Antwerp almost the noblest port in Europe. Above all, the citizens of Antwerp, who behold the full and deep current of the Scheld gliding by their walls, and who from their towers descry that distant sea to which their ships are
not

not permitted to approach, have regretted that bondage in which their city has been so long kept by the articles of a treaty too rigorous, and have flattered themselves with the hope, that the same Prince who has been able to open to his subjects in Germany and Hungary the navigation of the Danube, might also be able to regain to his subjects in the Low-Countries the free navigation of the Scheld.

The Emperor has not been unwilling to second the desires of his Flemish subjects; and the attention of Europe has been turned to the exertions made by this Prince to obtain the navigation of this important river. The efforts of the Sovereign in this instance have not been crowned with success, and Antwerp has fallen from the hopes which she had conceived. A more fortunate conjuncture may arrive, when, actuated by more liberal principles of commerce, or pressed by the voice of conspiring nations

nations to whose access the Scheld is now denied, and less sustained by a powerful monarchy, Holland may be more easily determined to relinquish a right, less profitable to her own Republic than detrimental to the Austrian Netherlands, and when an antient and noble city may be restored to those natural benefits of which it has been so long deprived.

While trade suffers an obstruction from the want of commodious ports, other causes may also be noticed, that have been detrimental to commerce in these countries, and by which its progress may still be retarded.

It is to be remarked, that the power of imposing duties on all imports and exports in the Austrian Netherlands, is a prerogative belonging entirely to the Prince; as the custom-duties are appropriated entirely to the revenue of the Sovereign, of which they make no inconsiderable part. This high prerogative, which it seems not easy to reconcile either
with

with the free spirit of the constitution, or with the interests of commerce, unknown in more early times, was first assumed under plausible pretexts by Philip the II^d, not long after that reconciliation took place, by which the Catholic Provinces consented to return to the dominion of Spain. The States of the Provinces, and particularly the States of Brabant, remonstrated against this power assumed by the Sovereign ; but their remonstrances did not prevail. Philip did not desist from the exercise of this prerogative, which, transmitted to his successors, is at length become inherent in the Prince. The bad effects that may result to commerce from the indiscreet use of this power, may easily be understood. Valuable branches of commerce, that sustain little prejudice from moderate impositions, may be entirely lost when they are subjected to heavier burdens ; and while a prince, by unwisely increasing the custom-duties, seeks to augment

ment his revenue, the fountain itself from which wealth flows into his treasury, as well as into his country, may be entirely dried up. This truth has not always been well understood by the Austrian Princes, residing at a distance from the Netherlands, and little acquainted with mercantile affairs ; and the decline of commerce, under the Spanish Princes in the last century, may be in some part ascribed to the injudicious exercise of a prerogative, by which commerce is subjected to the will of the monarch. A better exercise of this prerogative may be relied on in the hands of the present Sovereign, who has visited his Flemish States, and who, to an attention to advance their trade, has added a just discernment of the principles of commerce *.

Internal

* An Imperial edict that has lately been the subject of political discussions in Britain, and by which high duties are imposed on English merchandize imported into the Austrian Netherlands, affords a proof of the controul which

Internal commerce is necessary to the support and growth of external commerce. The interior commerce possesses here some advantages that facilitate its progress: in particular, it draws much benefit from that easy communication, which is maintained by those numerous canals, which in this country are of such antient formation, and which England has begun so lately to imitate. Yet there are restraints also, that, embarrassing the internal communication, are prejudicial to trade. Such are those restraints that in many cities and districts arise from exclusive privileges, of very old date, granted to certain ranks of men, who have the sole right of transporting goods by land, or water, within certain limits. Such are

the Sovereign exercises over the Flemish commerce. Charles the First would willingly have assumed the same authority over the customs in England, which Philip the Second acquired in the Catholic Netherlands. The Parliament of England succeeded better than the States of Brabant in withstanding this pretension of the Prince.

also

also the restraints, that arise from those numerous offices erected for the gathering of duties, and from that repeated visitation, vexatious to the trader, to which his merchandise is subjected in its passage from place to place. This embarrassment arises in a great degree from the constitution of this country, where the Provinces, formerly separate principalities, still keep their independence, possessing each its distinct revenue, and imposing and collecting its distinct taxes; where the trader of Flanders, who transports his merchandise into Brabant or Haynault, now under the dominion of the same Prince, is subjected to the payment of frontier-duties, as antiently when these Provinces were governed by distinct Princes. The internal communication is likewise much interrupted here, by the interposition of the dominions of the neighbouring States, which in many

parts lie much intermixed with the Austrian territory *.

The laws and regulations of commerce framed in this country, in the age of its splendor, much surpassed those of other countries, and were adopted by the neighbouring nations that afterwards applied themselves to commerce; but since that period, commercial regulations have gained improvement from the increased experience of other States, whose usages might now be adopted with advantage to remedy the defects that are found here. Thus, among other instances, causes relating to mercantile matters, that in other countries are summarily decided by judges who are themselves skilled in commercial affairs, or whose judgment is guided by the customs of mer-

* Thus the dominion of France, intervening between the Austrian cities of Mons and Tournay, renders the communication of the Scheld of small use to these cities in their intercourse with each other.

chants,

chants, are here subjected to a long and expensive process through courts of law, and are decided by judges who are not versed in affairs of trade, nor draw much light from the experience of mercantile persons. This disadvantage has been remarked; and it has been said, that a tribunal is to be erected here, on a model which is found in some countries, composed of judges skilled in commercial matters, to whose cognizance all mercantile controversies are to be referred. That confusion also which prevails in the jurisprudence of this country, where each province possesses its own laws, differing in many points from those of the other Provinces, is perplexing to commerce.

Among the circumstances that obstruct the progress of trade, is also to be numbered that opinion which is entertained here, that the profession of commerce is unsuitable to the dignity of men of noble

family; a vain prejudice, which has gained strength under the government of Spain, particularly misplaced in a country that owes its chief celebrity to traffic, and whose noble families are for the most part sprung from commercial ancestors. The detriment which commerce sustains from this prejudice is the greater, that nobility is easily attained here, and embraces a very wide circle. England, where the sons and descendants of noble families disdain not to engage in commercial pursuits, sets in this respect an example to other nations, that is worthy their imitation. The present reign promises to correct this prejudice in the Austrian Netherlands. The Emperor has sufficiently testified, by the honours which he has paid to persons eminent in the mercantile line, in what high estimation he holds a profession, which gives exercise to a vigorous and improved understanding in those who practise it, and which tends

tends so much to advance the wealth and prosperity of nations.

The rising commerce of this country has invited many persons of the mercantile profession, from other parts of Europe, to fix their abode here. Among these are English merchants, who bring with them into this country those liberal and enlarged thoughts, that so generally belong to men of that class in England, and whose active spirit employs itself with success in promoting the traffic of these Provinces. To their exertion is owing the establishment of a bank at Brussels; an establishment, which, though so necessary for facilitating the operations of commerce, is yet new in the Austrian Netherlands.

SECTION VI.

THE early improvement of manufactures is the boast of the Flemish Provinces. These, not unknown here in the age of Charlemagne, soon attained to higher perfection in the ages that succeeded. While the neighbouring nations scarce knew any other occupation besides that of war, the busy inhabitants of Flanders and Brabant were trained to the diligence of trades and crafts, which were held here in peculiar esteem. Many parts of ingenious art were invented or improved by the Flemings, who were long unrivalled in the excellence of their fabrics of various kinds.

Among the manufactures that flourished here at an early time, and that brought great emolument to the natives, was that woollen manufacture, whose origin in these
Provinces

Provinces is recorded to have been of the most antient date. The Princesses, daughters of Charlemagne, are said to have employed their leisure in the texture of woollen fabrics. In the twelfth century, this manufacture, well understood and happily pursued, gave occupation to vast multitudes, and brought immense wealth to Flanders and Brabant. The bounds of the cities were enlarged, that they might contain that swarm of inhabitants who pursued the labours of the loom; and the frequent dissensions that arose between the numerous manufacturers crowded in the same city, needed often to be repressed by the power of the Prince. Louvain above all was distinguished by its flourishing woollen trade. The relations, that have been transmitted concerning the multitudes engaged in this art that were antiently contained within Louvain, could scarcely gain credit, unless they were confirmed

firmed by the large extent of that now decayed city. The woollen trade continued long to enrich the Flemings. Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, decorated that order of Knighthood which he instituted with the title of the Golden Fleece, in honour of a manufacture from which his dominions derived so much wealth*.

The

* Petrarch, so celebrated by his love for Laura, who visited these countries in the fourteenth century, has noticed this industry of Flanders: "*Et vidi ceteros Flandriæ Brabantiaque populos, lanificos atque textores.*"

The eminence of the Flemings in many arts, and particularly in that weaving trade in the remotest times, under the government of Rome, might be shewn from many passages of antient authors, if these Essays were not confined to a later period. "Shall the Roman Empire fall, if the country of Artois withholds its woven garments?" was the saying of a Roman Emperor, when the Belgic Provinces were seized by the German invaders. The irruption of the barbarous nations was fatal to that industry, as well as to husbandry and commerce, which had made some progress here at that distant period; though it may be thought, that the early revival of arts among the Flemings was in some measure owing to that root which they had taken under the government of Rome. Some cities also, though now of small note in this country, were founded when it was held by the Romans:

The wool of England, of a more excellent quality than that of Flanders, contributed not a little to the perfection of the Flemish manufacture. In those ages, the English, "shepherds only to Flanders and Brabant," unskilled in arts, and insensible of the riches which their island possessed in the fleeces of her flocks, endured that the wool of England should be transported to strangers, and were contented to be supplied by the looms of Flanders with that drapery, and those woollen webs, of which themselves had furnished the materials. A staple was appointed in the Low-Countries where the English wool was sold; and the

mans: the cities that have flourished in modern times are of a more recent origin. Brussels in the eighth century consisted only of a few hamlets scattered on the banks of the Senne. Charles, Duke of the Lower Lorraine, excluded by the power of the Capet family from the throne of France, to which he had a just title as the descendant of Charlemagne, laid the foundation of the greatness of Brussels in the tenth century, having raised a palace, where he made his abode, in an island surrounded by the arms of the Senne, now enclosed within the walls of Brussels.

English

English Princes, on various occasions, rashly bestowed on these lands, in vain presents, this valuable commodity of their kingdom. Edward the Third, solicitous to draw the Princes of the Netherlands into his alliance, when he aspired to the crown of France, distributed among the Flemings gifts of wool with a lavish hand. An important privilege is recorded, which the drapers of Brussels obtained from this Prince for their trade. Yet by degrees the English perceived the loss that they sustained from their own unskilfulness, and began to aspire to the art of the Flemings, whose riches they beheld with envy. Edward the Third, not negligent of the improvements of peace amidst the wars to which he was prompted by ambition, sought to engage the artificers of Flanders to pass into England. The dispersion of the manufacturers of Louvain also in that age, introduced into England, in some degree, the

the skill of the woollen trade. Wenceslaus, Duke of Brabant, incensed against the citizens of Louvain on account of the frequent tumults in which they were engaged, expelled the manufacturers from that city, and, by that unwise and too rigorous chastisement, wrought the fall of Louvain. But the progress of the English in arts was slow ; and it was not till a later period, when the strife of the red rose and the white had subsided, and when the tyranny of the Duke of Alva had caused a more complete dispersion of the Flemish arts, that the English applied themselves to works of industry with success. Then enjoying repose under the government of a politic Queen, and taught by the Flemings, who settled in great number among them, they pursued the weaving arts ; and since that time, adding new improvements to the skill of their masters, and restraining within their own isle the fleeces of their country,

country, they have surpassed all nations in that woollen manufacture, which now distributes its products to the remotest parts of the globe, and supplies to England a principal source of its wealth *.

Besides

* The Fleece, a beautiful poem, and well suited to the British muse, has described the migration of the weaving arts from Flanders, and their various settlements in England, the origin of our flourishing woollen trade :

Our day arose;

When Alva's tyranny the weaving arts
Drove from the fertile vallies of the Scheld.
With speedy wing, and scattered course, they fled,
Like a community of bees, disturb'd
By some relentless swain's rapacious hand ;
While good Eliza to the fugitives
Gave gracious welcome ; as wise Egypt erst
To troubled Nilus, whose nutritious flood
With annual gratitude enrich'd her meads.
Then, from fair Antwerp, an industrious train
Cross'd the smooth channel of our smiling seas ;
And in the vales of Cantium, on the banks
Of Stour alighted, and the naval wave
Of spacious Medway ; some on gentle Yare,
And fertile Waveney, pitch'd ; and made their seats
Pleasant Norvicum, and Colcestria's towers :
Some to the Darent sped their happy way :
Berghem, and Sluys, and elder Bruges, chose
Antona's chalky plains, and stretch'd their tents

Down

Besides the woollen manufacture, many other manufactures in former times employed the labour, and augmented the riches, of the Flemings. That early correspondence which the Italian States entertained with the Low-Countries, was favourable to the Flemish industry. Venice, which first of modern States claims the praise of having introduced many arts into Europe from the East, taught to the people of the Netherlands the skill of curious manufactures, which she had learnt from her intercourse with Asia; and the Flemings, by their care and ingenuity, soon equalled or surpassed the workmanship of their masters. Manufactures increased with the growing commerce of these Provinces. Antwerp, in the sixteenth century, was not

Down to Clausentum, and that bay supine

Beneath the shade of Vecta's cliffy ile.

Soon o'er the hospitable realm they spread,

With cheer reviv'd; and in Sabrina's flood

And the Silurian Tame their textures blanch'd, &c.

more

more renowned by her traffic, than by the branches of art in which her inhabitants were employed. The writers of that age enumerate with admiration the various industry of that city ; her magnificent tapestries, and rich embroideries ; her fabrics of velvet, sattin and damask ; her skill in refining metals and polishing precious stones ; with other curious inventions, that drew the wonder even of those who had been accustomed to behold the arts and ingenuity of Italy. At that time the skill and labour of the Flemings supplied manufactures not only to the greatest part of Europe, but also to the new-discovered regions in Asia and America. The gold of the Indies, according to the expression of a late elegant writer of this country*, only passed through the hands of the Spaniards

* The Count de Neny, who held the office of President of the Privy-Council of the Austrian Netherlands, lately dead, author of "*Memoires Historiques et Politiques des Pays-bas Autrichiens ;*" a work composed for the education of the Emperor.

and Portuguese, to repay the industry of the inhabitants of the Netherlands.

The manufactures of the Flemish Provinces experienced a rapid decline in the reign of Philip the Second; and the fall of commerce after the peace of Munster, with the calamities that ensued in the latter period of the Spanish government, completed the evils which the persecution of the Duke of Alva had begun. The neighbouring States profited from the dispersion of the arts of Flanders and Brabant, and the manufactures of Holland and England were improved by the hands of Flemish emigrants. But all the arts were enfeebled, and languor pervaded every branch of industry in the Austrian Netherlands, at the conclusion of the last century.

The happier situation of this country, since the peace of Utrecht, in this century, has recalled the industry of manufactures.

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The

The active spirit of the people, repressed for a time by unfavourable circumstances, now exerts itself again in useful labours of various kinds; and the productions of art in many articles have gradually increased, and employed a greater number of busy hands. Though the Flemings supply not Europe, as formerly, with the products of their skill, and though the works of art in this country are now in most branches surpassed by the improvements of other nations, yet these Provinces still possess valuable fabrics, while they retain the glory of having instructed the neighbouring States in many of those curious or useful arts by which they have been since enriched.

The flax of Flanders supplies to that Province its most valuable manufacture. The linen manufactures of that country are not surpassed, in their various kinds, by the manufactures of that sort of any other nation, and give employment and subsistence
to

to a great number of people. Ghent and Courtray are noted for their linen manufactures. The bleaching-fields of Ghent, contained within its walls, and extended by the side of the rivers and canals that wash that city, and divide it into numerous isles, draw the attention of strangers. The care of the Magistrate is employed to watch over the goodness of this fabric, which passes into many other countries, and affords a principal article of commerce. Spain, that held so long an intimate relation with this part of the Netherlands, still draws from the industry of Flanders, those manufactures of linen with which she supplies her American Colonies.

The fine flax of these Provinces yields also the materials of that elegant manufacture, so well known by the name of the lace of Mechlin and Brussels. The invention of this art, which yields so fair an employment to female industry, is due to

this country; and the skill of the natives of this land in this art, imitated in other lands, has not yet been equalled. If it can be credited, as it is sometimes asserted, that this manufacture, wrought in other countries with the same materials with which it is wrought here, and by the hands of the same artists, yet attains not to the same perfection, it must be supposed, that the air has an influence upon the slender frame of this delicate fabric. It is said, that above 100,000 persons are employed in this manufacture, in Mechlin and Brabant. The lace of Brussels has long been distinguished by delicacy of design and workmanship. Valenciennes possesses also this manufacture; but that city of Haynault belongs now to France.

The manufacture of tapestry, if it had its origin rather among the Saracens than the Flemings, and was transported hither from Asia, yet was perfected sooner in this
than

than in any European country. The name by which this fabric was long known in England, "the many coloured Arras," points out the city of Artois, that antiently was most noted for curious works of tapestry. The study of the painters who flourished here at an early period, and who applied their skill to furnish designs for tapestries, forwarded the progress of this manufacture. This beautiful art, which, by the labour of the loom, so happily imitates the various scenes of nature, and transmits the acts of heroes to remembrance, subsists in these Provinces in the same perfection as formerly, but, less encouraged, employs at Brussels, where it is most pursued, only a small number of looms. The change of fashion, together with the expence that attends the working of tapestry, occasions the fall of this fabric. The rich and great, who formerly adorned their mansions with tapestry, and for whose

apartments this art furnishes an ornament so lasting and magnificent, now content themselves with a furniture less costly, and that is varied with small expence. Unless this art shall meet with timely encouragement, it will soon be lost to this country, where it had its most ancient seat. Even in France, into whose capital this manufacture has been transplanted from Flanders, the tapestry of the Gobelins is not supported without the aid of the Court.

That woollen manufacture, which formerly employed such multitudes in Flanders and Brabant, now fallen into decay in these Provinces, is found chiefly in the Province of Limburg. The manufacturers of Louvain, dispersed in the fourteenth century by their Prince the Duke of Brabant, first brought, as it is said, this branch of industry into the country of Limburg, united under the same Government with Brabant, and partaking the same privileges.

leges. Since that time, this manufacture has not been lost in that country, and is now pursued with success. That ample leisure, which the occupations of pasturage permit, is usefully bestowed on the loom by the inhabitants of that Province, less collected in cities, than pursuing their industry in their small tenements scattered at small distances over the face of that populous country. The cloth of Limburg passes into Germany and other countries, and makes an advantageous branch of commerce. Certain privileges, that are still possessed by the drapers of Louvain, call to remembrance the woollen trade of that once flourishing city, so harshly treated by the Duke Wenceslaus. Succeeding Princes fought, by the endowment of learned halls and stately colleges, to repair to this city a loss which it still testifies in its wide unpeopled bounds, and in the fields that are laid into tillage within its walls.

The metals, that are contained in the Provinces of Namur and Luxemburg, furnish an exercise to the industry of these countries. The iron-works in particular of Namur employ numerous forges and furnaces, and produce many articles that are useful to the natives, or that yield an advantage in the traffic with strangers. Coal, which abounds in that country and in Haynault, and the wood of the Ardennes, supply an ample fuel to the forge and the furnace: the river Meuse yields also the benefit of a communication with France and Holland; a benefit that would be more sensibly felt, if the merchandise transported by this river, which in its way to the Ocean passes through many different States, and belongs now to Austria only in a small part of its course, was not subjected to heavy and arbitrary duties. The productions of this iron-manufacture have been in late years much augmented,
and

and a large field is open for future improvement. The Province of Namur possesses the same advantages that are enjoyed by the bordering country of Liege, whose iron-works are of a very antient establishment, and which has long maintained a profitable commerce by the fabrication of fire-arms.

A mine of calamine, a metal by whose mixture with copper brass is produced, gives its name to a mountain in which it is found in the Province of Limburg. This mine, whose calamine is of an excellent quality, the subject of early industry, has been worked through many ages in that country. In the sixteenth century, the workmen that were employed in digging and refining the metal of Mount Calamine, were so numerous, and were subjected to such order in their various tasks, that around the mountain was exhibited the appearance of a regular and well-governed

governed republic. On account of the religious troubles which arose at that time, many of the workmen forsook their dwellings at the foot of Mount Calamine, and retired to the neighbouring lands of Germany, where they were not disturbed in their religious worship. In these new seats they continued their industry, supplied with calamine from the mountain. The race of these artificers are said to continue the same occupation in their dwellings on the confines of Limburg, and the calamine of the mountains is still conveyed to them.

Various manufactures are established in the cities of Flanders, Brabant, and Haynault; manufactures of silk, of cotton, of porcelain, of glass, and other fabrics, which these Provinces possess in common with the neighbouring countries. Among the manufactures of antient establishment, may

may be remarked some that are recorded to have been invented in these Provinces. Such is that manufacture of gilded or figured leather; a fabric which formerly supplied the apartments of the great with a rich and lasting furniture, now less in use than formerly, though in some countries that fashion is still retained. Such is also the art of stained or painted glass; an invention well suited to the solemn gloom of Gothic temples, and which has been often used to delineate holy legend or scripture story on the windows of religious edifices:

“ And storied windows, richly dight,

“ Casting a dim religious light *.”

Many specimens of this invention, which has exercised the ingenuity of the Flemish painters, are to be seen here in the churches and convents. The lapidary's skill, and the art of polishing diamonds, which an-

* Milton.

tiently brought great riches to Antwerp, still remain in that city, though with diminished profit*.

The extension of commerce, the industry of the people, and the cheapness of labour in a plentiful country, promise to this country an increase of manufactures. Neither have the cares of the present Sovereign been wanting to this important object. An enlightened Prince, who seeks to establish manufactures in those parts of his wide empire where they have never prevailed, neglects not to encourage their progress in Provinces in which they antiently sub-

* As an instance of that respect which the Princes of this country have paid to useful inventions, it may be remarked, that the Emperor Charles the Fifth, with his sister Mary of Hungary, did not disdain to repair to Biervliet, in Flanders, to visit the tomb of William benkelins, who in the fifteenth century found the secret of curing herrings; a secret which much enriched the Netherlands, and of which Holland, since the foundation of her Republic, has much availed herself. Britain, encompassed by the sea, has not yet learnt to reap the same advantage from the discovery of William Benkelins.

sisted in such vigour, and where so many branches of art have had their origin.

Many of the manufactures and fabrics of the Austrian States are in the hands of those communities of crafts and trades, whose institution reaches back to a very early period, and which, admitted here to peculiar honour, form an essential and important part of the constitution. The institution of these incorporations, and the ample privileges bestowed on them, contributed not a little to forward the progress of arts, in the rude ages in which these communities were established. But many of the laws and statutes of these incorporations, ill adapted to the present times, are found to be detrimental to the arts which they were first intended to forward. The present Sovereign has, in some instances, wisely suspended the exercise of these statutes, and may extend the same care with advantage to other objects of that kind.

Disad-

Disadvantages have been also found in England from the exclusive privileges granted to incorporations; and the example of those towns where no incorporations are established, has shewn that manufactures succeed no where better than in places where no exclusive privileges have force, and where an open field is left to the industry of all.

Tyranny and religious persecution first compelled the merchant and manufacturer to quit these lands, and to carry their wealth and skill with them into distant countries. A mild government, and that religious toleration which the present Sovereign has so nobly advanced here beyond its former narrow limits, and beyond the example of other nations, now invite those who are oppressed in other countries to take refuge in the Austrian Netherlands. A powerful faction within the walls of Geneva, sustained by the might and intrigues

trigues of France, has subverted the antient constitution of that city; and France, that boasts to have bestowed liberty on the distant American, has imposed servitude on this republic situated on her borders. The inhabitants of Geneva, deserting in great numbers a country that is no longer free, have dispersed themselves into different parts of Europe. A part of these citizens have fixed their abode at Brussels; and it is likely that the arts of that ingenious people may also pass into the Flemish Provinces.

SECTION VII.

NO country in Europe contains, within equal bounds, a greater number of spacious cities than are to be found in the Austrian Netherlands. The Spanish soldiers under the Duke of Alva, when they entered the Low-Countries, are said to have cried out in astonishment, that Flanders was one continued city.

As the cities, from the immunities which they obtained, encouraged the progress of arts and commerce, so also increasing arts and traffic augmented the number and extent of cities, and filled them soon with numerous and wealthy inhabitants. Those great cities, which in this country cover such large spaces, and succeed to one another at so small distances, owed their growth or foundation to that trade
and

and industry, which began to prosper here not long after the age of Charlemagne *. In the twelfth century Ghent was conspicuous by her stately domes and towery pride, by her wealth and numerous people. The early treasures amassed in these industrious communities, may be estimated from the large subsidies that they were wont to bestow on their Princes. The cities of Brabant gave at one time to their Duke Wenceslaus, discomfited in the unfortunate battle of Bas-weiler, in the fourteenth century, a subsidy of 300,000 l. a vast sum in those times, when the precious metals were so rare, and when the rich mines of the New World were not yet found. The magnificence displayed on public solemnities was suited to this great opulence, and

* Thirty cities or walled towns are counted in the Province of Flanders : Brabant possesses nearly an equal number. Though these Provinces have been dismembered by France and Holland, yet the greatest part of these cities is contained in the Austrian Flanders and Brabant.

drew the wonder and envy of neighbouring Princes. When the Queen of France, the consort of Philip the Fair, made her entry into Bruges in the thirteenth century, she was astonished at the finery and rich attire of the ladies of that city, and could not refrain from expressing her surprize, in terms that shewed her chagrin. "I thought (said the haughty Princess) that I had been the only Queen here; but I perceive that there are six hundred Queens at Bruges;" and the despite which she felt on this occasion wrought afterwards, as the historian adds, great troubles to Flanders.

The populousness of these communities added great force to the State. As in those rude times the inhabitants of cities were trained to arms, and united martial prowess with the industry of trades and mechanical arts, the Sovereign gained a mighty accession to his strength, from the bands of
brave

brave citizens that fought in his armies. The Count of Flanders was respected among Princes, by the warlike succours which he drew from his large and populous cities. Ghent alone is said to have contained 50,000 fighting men within her walls. The Flemish were noted for their fierce and obdurate valour, and tried their strength against France in many signal encounters. The victory of Courtray, in the thirteenth century, where the troops of Flanders were led to battle by an artisan of Bruges, and gave so notable an overthrow to the army of France, is a monument of the courage and success of the Flemings, in withstanding their powerful neighbours*.

As

* A French Poet of the fourteenth century, William the Briton, has described the succour which Ferrand Count of Flanders drew from his cities of Flanders, and Artois, in that war which he waged with Philip-Augustus, King of France. The Latin verses of William the Briton, not much to be admired on account of their elegance, deserve

As the cities by their wealth and populousness advanced the dignity of the Prince,

so

attention, as they record the early greatness of the Flemish cities, and the arts which flourished in them: that art of the clothier, which so much enriched Flanders, is not omitted: Ghent, Ypres, Arras, Bruges, Lisle, are thus described:

Communia Gandavorum

Turritis domibus, gazis, et gente superba,
Instructas armis, acies bis millia dena,
Et plures, propriis expensis donat eidem.
Auxilium bello sequitur non impare fastu,
Ipra colorandis gens prudentissima lanis,
Execranda juvans legionibus arma duabus:
Atrebatumque potens urbs, antiquissima, plena
Divitiis, inhians lucris, et fœnore gaudens.

Nec Brugia defuit illi,

In strepitu tanto quin pluribus adjuvet illum:
Brugia, quæ caligis obnubat crura potentum,
Frugibus et pratis dives, portuque propinquo.

Insula, post illos, nihilominus exerit arma,
Hostica non paucas armat in bella phalanges,
Insula, villa placens, gens callida lucra sequendo,
Insula, quæ nitidis se mercatoribus ornat,
Regna coloratis illuminat externa pannis,
Unde reportantur solidi, quibus illa superbit.

The other cities of Flanders and Artois have also a place in the verses of this Poet. The issue of this war was not propitious to the Count of Flanders. Philip, who on ac-

count

so also by their turbulent disposition, and that republican spirit by which they were animated, they sometimes overpowered the authority of their Sovereigns, as yet the masters of no wide domain. Popular leaders, by their influence in the great cities of Flanders, acquired such an ascendant as gave to them the entire management of the State. A remarkable instance occurs in the history of James Artevelde. That noted brewer of Ghent, and trusty ally and counsellor of Edward the Third, by his interest in the cities, drew all authority to himself, and governed Flanders with a more absolute sway than the Sovereign had ever exercised ; whilst the Count of Flanders, Louis of Nevers, dispossessed of his authority, was obliged to take refuge in France. A band of armed men accompanied Arte-

count of his successes obtained the title of Augustus, triumphed at the memorable battle of Bouvines over Ferrand, who had for his allies the Emperor Otto, and King John of England.

velde in all places : the public revenues were entirely at his disposal ; and, not contented to have engaged the Flemings in an alliance with the English King, in opposition to the will of his Sovereign, he had even conceived the bold idea of transferring the sovereignty of Flanders to the son of Edward, the Black Prince. At length, the ambitious Artevelde was slain by those citizens of Ghent whom he had so often stirred up to arms. But the same power, and factious spirit, was renewed in his son. Philip Artevelde was no less formidable to Louis of Male, the last Count of Flanders, than his father had been to Louis of Nevers, and in the fields of Rosebec had the boldness to give battle to his Sovereign, who was accompanied by the Duke of Burgundy his son-in-law, by the young King of France Charles the Sixth, and the whole flower of the French Nobility. Even when the authority of the Prince was enlarged, and
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when the Netherlands were united under one powerful master, the bold and mutinous spirit of these cities was not repressed. The powerful Dukes of Burgundy, Philip the Good, and Charles the Bold, were obliged to take arms against the rebellious cities of Flanders; and the choleric Charles was constrained sometimes to suppress the resentment that he felt on account of these tumults. Maximilian of Austria was detained some months a prisoner by the factious inhabitants of Bruges. Neither the power of Charles the Fifth and the terror of his name, nor that peculiar affection which Ghent entertained for him as born within her walls, was sufficient to deter the citizens of Ghent from that dangerous revolt, in which they fought to withdraw themselves from obedience to their Sovereign, and to admit into their city his rival, Francis the First.

The Flemish cities are now greatly fallen from that high degree of splendour which they displayed in former ages. Those busy throngs that were employed in works of art, and whose free spirit sometimes degenerated into licentiousness, disappeared when commerce departed from this shore, and dejection and solitude overpread those once crowded seats of industry and trade. The felicity of the present times has awakened a more active spirit in the cities, which of late have received many embellishments, and improvement. The number of inhabitants also has increased, although much inferior to the multitude that these cities formerly contained, and little proportioned to the wide space that their walls surround.

Brussels, antiently the residence of the Dukes of Brabant and Burgundy, and since the residence of the Governor of those Provinces,

Provinces, and the seat of a Court, may be esteemed the capital of the Austrian Netherlands. Brussels, pleasantly situated, rises from a plain through which the river Senne passes, and where the city took its beginning, ascending a hill on whose eminence its fairest buildings are placed, and that overlooks a wide and beautiful prospect. In the most elevated part of the city stood the antient palace of the Dukes of Burgundy, afterwards noted for that solemn abdication which Charles the Fifth here made of his empire, consumed by fire about the middle of this century. The fair buildings that have been erected lately in the quarter where that antient palace stood, and the embellishments that have been bestowed on the park adjacent to the palace, have added a great ornament to Brussels. The Council of Brabant holds its seat in an edifice suited to the dignity of that tribunal. A spacious canal, the work
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of the sixteenth century, extends from Bruffels, and joins the river Scheld, which, though not open to the vessels of these Provinces where it enters the sea, yet yields a communication with Holland, and by the canals of Flanders with the ocean. By this canal the city carries on a growing traffic; and at a distance from the ocean, where no navigable river passes, a port is seen crowded with vessels not of the smallest burden. The French, when masters of Bruffels, respected the lofty trees of the Cours, or Allée Verte, which borders this spacious canal. The outlets of this city lead on all sides into a fair and fruitful country, stretched into plains, or rising in gentle acclivities. The woods of Soigne at a small distance spread into a wide extent, whose pleasing scenes have afforded to the Flemish painters many subjects for their compositions. Bruffels is now esteemed the most populous city in the Austrian Netherlands.

therlands. The inhabitants have been lately numbered, and are found to amount to nearly a hundred thousand*.

Situated in fruitful plains, by the side of rivers and navigable canals, the Flemish cities were well placed for sustaining those multitudes that they once contained, and for pursuing that commerce by which they were soon distinguished. The free fairs,

* Bentivoglio has described this city and the country around: "O quanto mi piace Brusseles et questo sito. Giace in grembo d'un piano, al salir d'un colle, et da quella parte che si va alzando, Jo feci la mia entrata, et non ho mai veduta Scena piu bella. Il paese al intorno e amenissimo, et ora di mezzo Agosto ride la primavera nei prati."

The principal cities of this country have been distinguished by appellations that aptly enough characterise them. Thus Brussels is named the noble, bruges the antient, Ghent the great, Antwerp the wealthy, Louvain the learned, Mechlin the neat. The city of Mechlin was particularly cherished by the Dukes of Burgundy, who erected here a celebrated tribunal, or council, named by distinction the Great Council, which antiently possessed a wider jurisdiction, and to which appeals are still carried from the Councils of Flanders and Namur.

whose

whose origin is very antient, and of which, though now of less utility, the remains are still to be found here, contributed greatly to the progress of commerce, as well as to the growth of the cities of the Low-Countries. Baldwin, Count of Flanders, obtains the praise of having granted free fairs to many of his cities in the tenth century, when the precious metals were yet so scarce, that commercial intercourse was commonly carried on by barter. In an age when commerce was so much oppressed by the feudal tyranny, the merchants were encouraged to repair to free fairs, where, by the favour of Princes, they possessed opportunities of traffic, with security to themselves and their effects. The various merchandise displayed at the free fairs, drew the resort of strangers from distant parts, who found there many articles of use or ornament, which, at a time when traffic was so little diffused, they sought for in vain

vain in other places. Amusement, no less than convenience, attracted the multitude. The merchants were accompanied by comedians and musicians, who entertained the croud with shows and interludes, that they might the more easily allure them to lay out their money in merchandise*. Such were the first rude essays of commerce; and from these beginnings the free fairs grew into high repute, enlarging and enriching the cities in which they were held. The fairs of Bruges and Antwerp were of principal note, and drew a vast confluence of strangers. The ingenious Erasmus, who beheld this country in its most brilliant age, under Charles the Fifth, has laid the scene of a lively dialogue in a journey to the fair of Antwerp.

The stately edifices that are found in these spacious cities, which at present are

* The entertainments of Bartholomew Fair, now abridged by the magistrate, had a like origin.

not surpassed by many, and antiently were inferior in beauty to none, of the cities of the neighbouring countries, have been often noticed and described with great particularity. In a country noted for her munificence to the church, and for the splendour of religion, stately convents and noble temples, decorated with sculptures and paintings, the works of the great Flemish masters, make no small part of the pride of the cities. The splendid abbey of St. Peter, whose abbot holds a high rank in Flanders, adorns the city of Ghent: the admired paintings of Rubens give peculiar distinction to the noble cathedral of Antwerp. The Stad-house, or Guild-hall, venerable for the most part by its Gothic architecture, and ornamented with the statues of the antient Princes of the country, is always a distinguished edifice in cities, which so early acquired the form and authority of small republics, and

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to whose magistrates such important functions are committed. The edifices that belong to the Companies of Arts and Trades, which possess here so much influence, and without whose consent no subsidy can be granted to the Prince, are also conspicuous buildings, distinguished sometimes by whimsical names, and a whimsical architecture †. The early rights that were acquired by cities, drawing the villagers to seek an abode within their walls, increased the number of citizens. Oppressed by their feudal Lords, the inhabitants of the country gladly withdrew from the

† Thus the edifice belonging to the Company of Mariners, at Brussels, is so constructed, that its upper story resembles perfectly the stern of a ship.

Instances of little ornaments and conceits in architecture and sculpture are not unusual here. The chronogram displays itself pompously, in capital letters, in the inscriptions of most public buildings, and haunts even temples and altars. In churches, the sculptor has employed his art in the decoration of the pulpit, which, for the most part, presents an allegory or scripture history executed with curious workmanship.

lands

lands of haughty Barons, to enter into cities, where they were under the jurisdiction of their own Magistrates, and where, by the exercise of trades and crafts, they acquired property and consideration in the State. The Princes also, willing to diminish the power of the great Barons, and to lessen the number of their vassals, were not displeased that the villagers deserted the lands of their Lords, and by ordinances gave countenance to their settlement in cities. In the time of Henry the First, Duke of Brabant, who began to reign in the end of the twelfth century, it was already grown into a law, that all who had inhabited the city for a year and a day were entitled to partake of its privileges, and could not be reclaimed by their Lords.

By degrees liberty was extended to the country, and the villages in imitation of the cities obtained the privilege, that the power of judging should be transferred
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from the lord, or his bailiff, to the village-magistracy. But the rights acquired in the country were not so considerable as in the cities, to whose privileges may be ascribed in a great degree the liberty that these Provinces have enjoyed through so many ages.

In the Flemish cities are still to be found the remains of those military bands, and orders, in which all the inhabitants were formerly enrolled, and trained to martial exercises. These bands of warlike citizens, who together with the feudal vassals accompanied the Prince to the field, and fought under their own banners, strengthened, as has been remarked, the power of the Sovereign ; and the privileges obtained by cities were sometimes bestowed, in return for the eminent services performed by the citizens in battle. Neither were these military bands led from their cities to war, by the mere will of the

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Prince.

Prince. In the beginning of the fifteenth century, when the citizens of Brussels, summoned by Antony of Burgundy Duke of Brabant, had assembled in arms, being informed by their magistrate, that their Prince, from pride or from obstinacy, refused to declare against what enemy he intended to lead them, they withdrew from the standard of the Duke, and left him with his feudal vassals to pursue the war against the Duke of Gelderland, whose name he had refused to disclose. The military service of the cities has long since fallen into disuse†; but contests in archery and

† The want of exact discipline among the bands of citizens, and that good cheer which they were accustomed to make at home, and did not easily renounce in the camp, proved sometimes a disadvantage in war. Froissart has drawn a lively picture of the Burghers of Brussels, at the battle of Bas-weiler, where Wenceslaus Duke of Brabant was overthrown by the Duke of Juliers.

“ Autour du Duc estoient, sur les champs, ses Brucellois, montés les aucuns à cheval, et leurs valets par derriere eux, qui portoient flascons et bouteilles de vin, troussées

and other exercises that still return at stated times, recall the memory of that antient warfare, and of those institutions by which the citizens were formerly trained to arms. The Princes of the country have sometimes engaged in these exercises, and have not been displeased to carry away the prize: an annual procession still cele-

féés à leurs selles, et aussi, parmi ce, fourrage et pâtés de faumons, de truites, et d'anguilles, enveloppées de belles petites touailles; et ensognoient la durement ces gens la place de leurs chevaux, tant qu'on ne se pouvoit aider de nul coûté. Donc dit Girard de Bies au Duc, "Sire, commandez que la place soit vuide de ces chevaux. Ils nous empeschent trop grandement: nous ne pouvons veoir autour de nous, n'avoir la congnoissance de l'avant-garde, ni de l'arriere-garde de vostre Marischal Messire Robert de Namur."—"Je le vueil," dit le Duc, et le commanda. Adonc prit Girard son glaive entre ses mains, and aussi firent ses compagnons, et commencerent à frapper sur les bacinets et sur les chevaux; et tantost la place en fut delivrée, car nul ne vouloit volontiers veoir son courfier navrer ne mehaigner." Girard de Bies did well with his sword to clear the ground, and to repress this croud of Brusselers, who embarrassed the army, and had brought such ample store of refreshments for themselves into the field.

brates the triumph that the Infanta Isabella obtained by her skill in archery.

As in the cities the inhabitants were enrolled in bands for the exercise of arms, and in companies for the prosecution of trades, so also they were disposed into societies that cultivated the elegant and liberal arts. These societies, distinguished by fanciful names, as the Rose, the Peony, the Fountain, took in a large part of the citizens, and made at times public exhibitions, in which they entertained their Princes with dramatic representations, and emblematic shews, according to the taste of those days, and, instituting literary contests, and bestowing prizes, animated the ingenious to excel in eloquence and poetry. On certain occasions, these societies from all the cities were summoned to assemble together, when, vying with each other in splendor, in these times of opulence, they displayed an extraordinary magnificence.

nificence. A contention was then held between them in trials of eloquence and displays of genius, as well as in the pride of shews and pageants, and prizes were assigned to those that were judged to excel. Assemblies of that kind were customary at the accession of their Princes. The Flemish writers have related a pompous exhibition of this sort, at the accession of Philip the Second, when the Marygold of Brussels, the Peony of Mechlin, and the Rose of Louvain, with other societies, repaired in great pomp to Antwerp, by the invitation of the Violet of Antwerp. The various societies gained various prizes, and the Peony and the Rose were not undistinguished. The prize of magnificence was adjudged to the Marygold of Brussels, on account of that splendid procession of cars and horsemen and proud pageants that graced her entry. With such festivities these Provinces honoured the accession of Philip the

Second, little foreseeing the calamities that awaited them in the reign of that Prince.

The cities of this country, which has so often been the theatre of wars, have been renowned by the sieges that they sustained, and by the strong fortifications with which they were begirt. In the long wars which were waged in Flanders, during the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, these strong places were besieged alternately by the arms of that Prince, and by the arms of the allied powers that withstood the ambition of France. The besiegers and besieged exhausted all the resources of the military art in the attack and defence of the cities, and the skill of the greatest engineers was displayed in strengthening their fortifications. The sieges of Mons, of Tournay, of Ath, are celebrated in the history of these times: Namur, taken by Louis the Fourteenth, and afterwards retaken by his rival King William, furnished a theme to the contending

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ing wits of England and France. During these contests, while the cities passed alternately from one master to another, they experienced many calamities of war. Their inhabitants were disturbed in their peaceful industry by incessant sieges, and their buildings were laid in ruins by the batteries of the assailants. Four thousand houses and fourteen churches at Brussels were reduced to ashes, at the end of the last century, when that city was bombarded by the Marshal Villeroy, who thus avenged the cities on the coasts of France bombarded by the fleets of England. Luxemburg and Charleroy shared the same fate with Brussels. The invasion of the Austrian Netherlands by Louis the Fifteenth, was also destructive to the Flemish cities, compelled to yield to the fierce artillery of the Marshal Saxe.

The present Sovereign of these Provinces, adopting a new system, has com-

manded the cities to be dismantled, and the fortifications by which they were surrounded to be destroyed. This order has been carried into execution. These high works, raised with so much labour and expence, are overthrown, the deep ditches are filled up, and fruitful crops are already gathered from the ground, that was possessed by bastions and ravelins. Of the many cities of the Flemish Provinces, Luxemburg alone, counted among the strongest fortresses of Europe, remains fortified towards France, and Antwerp towards Holland.

Motives of no slight weight are said to have determined the Sovereign to take this measure. These cities of vast extent are not to be garrisoned but by numerous battalions: even with a strong garrison, where their bounds are so wide, they may not be able long to resist, in an age in which the art of besieging is so much advanced; and

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if they are surrendered, the numerous battalions by which they were garrisoned, made prisoners of war, are lost to the State, and the Sovereign wages war with diminished force. If the cities now dismantled present no obstacle to invaders, yet they afford no ramparts or entrenchments by which an enemy can be covered. The Imperial armies advance to the succours of the Provinces ; and the enemies, if worsted in the field, cannot maintain themselves in a country where there are no strong holds. This system has been pursued with success in other parts, and may well be adopted with regard to this country, by a Sovereign who possesses dominions so vast and so far removed from this slender part of his States, and whose armies, though mighty, must necessarily be stationed near the center of his Empire. The learned in the engineer's art behold with regret the demolition of these fortifications, master-pieces of the skill of Cohorn

Cohorn and Vauban ; but they who love the repose of mankind, are not displeased with a system that lessens the horrors of war, and exempts from some part of its calamities the industrious inhabitants of cities.

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SECTION VIII.

COMMERCE and manufacture have declined in the Austrian Netherlands, but agriculture is undecayed. The populousness of the cities is diminished, but the number of inhabitants in the country is augmented beyond the parallel of past times. Even in the most flourishing time of these Provinces, under the Dukes of Burgundy and the first Princes of the Austrian line, the appearance of the country in regard to culture and population did not equal its present state.

The natives of this region betook themselves at an early time to the art of husbandry, to which they were invited by a soil well adapted to vegetation, and by the
happy

happy temperature of the climate. In ages when only a rude tillage was known in the neighbouring countries, agriculture had attained here to a great degree of perfection, and had gained that firm possession of the soil which it has since kept. The fertility of Flanders was not subdued by the ravages of war itself. Even in the last century, in that most unprosperous period when the other arts of the Flemish Provinces sunk and fell into decline, agriculture still retained its vigour: but during the long tranquillity which the present century has afforded, this art has acquired a new activity, and has advanced these lands to a still higher state of improvement. Where the tillage was imperfect, a more complete husbandry has taken place: large tracts that were formerly waste have been subjected to the plough: the villages have increased in extent and in number, and a degree of populousness is found in some
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of these Provinces, that is not perhaps surpassed in any part of Europe.

The rural scene presents here pleasing prospects on all sides, fields crowned with fruitful crops, meadows covered with numerous herds, neat and commodious farm-houses set singly or in groupes, chearful and crouded villages embowered among trees, and divided from each other by small intervals. Between such fair landscapes wind the rivers, or extend the clear canals of Flanders and Brabant. The bounty of the land is diffused in decent competence through all the multitude that inhabits it; and the looks of the labourer, his wholesome fare and neat dwelling, express that he has his share of that plenty with which his industry crowns the fields.

Agriculture flourishes greatly in Brabant and Haynault, but it is in the Province of Flanders that this art has attained its highest praise. Here were made the earliest

liest improvements of husbandry. In these rich plains, the plough, long held in veneration, has left the fewest spaces waste or unemployed; and the husbandman's art, aided here by long experience and pursued with constant industry, exhibits most the extent of its power in the copious productions that it calls forth from the earth.

The fields of Flanders never repose or lie fallow, yet the rich soil fails not to repay the care of the farmer by a constant succession of fruitful crops. Nor is he satisfied only with the crops that the summer ripens. Soon as the harvests are gathered, the earth receives again into its bosom new seeds or plants, and new crops of greens and vegetables arise, that cover the fields through the autumn and the winter months, till the spring warns to prepare the ground for the ensuing season. Such is the fertility which these lands derive from the natural goodness of the soil,
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from the rich manure which numerous cities and villages bestow, and from excellent methods of agriculture ; but above all, from the patient toil of the husbandman, who labours in these fields with unequalled industry and pains ;

Exercetque frequens tellurem, atque imperat arvis.

! The farms in Flanders are small, rarely exceeding fifty acres, and frequently contracted within a narrower bound. Set at a small distance from each other in the center of their respective farms, as is often the case here, the farm-houses, when seen from some eminence, present a continued village, and exhibit a picture of great population. The small extent of the farms has been thought, and not without reason, to have contributed much to the exact culture and populousness of Flanders. In a small farm, each part seen by the eye of the master has its due tillage : the work of husbandry

husbandry is chiefly performed by the farmer and his family, who spare no pains to cultivate that field which assures their subsistence ; and the glebe, subdued and manured with assiduous care, makes a large return to that labour which is bestowed on its culture. A vast population springs up, and the land is covered with the dwellings of a multitude of cultivators, who find each in the produce of that small farm which he tills, a decent and comfortable maintenance. It happens otherwise in a country where the farms are of wide extent. In a large farm, many parts are overlooked or neglected, and a more negligent culture is bestowed by hired labourers, more remiss and less interested in the crop. The great farmer is placed in a state of higher plenty, and his dwelling, his furniture, and table express his opulence ; but while he enjoys this affluence, and while luxury gains admittance among a rank of
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men to whose condition it is ill-suited, the populousness of the country decays, the number of industrious cultivators is diminished, and extreme indigence is often found in the dwellings of the cottagers that inhabit around.

The other Provinces have remarked the advantages which Flanders has derived from the small extent of the farms, and have imitated that example. The States of Haynault have, by an express law, limited the extent of the farms in that Province, and have ordained, that no farm shall contain a larger space than a hundred and fifty acres. The good effects of this regulation, which was made about thirty years ago, have been sensibly found. Since that time, the fields in Haynault are more completely cultivated, the lands are not permitted to lie fallow, the country has become more populous, and the villages, increasing, draw nearer to each other.

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The States of Brabant and Namur meditate by a similar law to circumscribe the extent of farms in these Provinces. That part of Brabant which is called the Walloon Brabant, is a country cast into large farms, and from that circumstance is less populous, and more imperfectly cultivated, than other parts of that Province where the small farms obtain.

A contrary practice has for some time past prevailed in England, where the number of small farms is diminished, and where the proprietors of estates have in frequent instances adopted the plan of laying many small farms into one large farm. Agriculture has not profited by this alteration. The glebe, stinted in its tillage where a single master grasps a large extent of fields, has not yielded more abundant harvests; and the markets, less amply provided in some important articles, miss that supply which they were accustomed to draw from
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the small farms. The populousness of the country has fallen. While the mansion of the great farmer has risen more ostentatiously, those numerous tenements that were scattered through the fields, or that encircled the cheerful green, have disappeared, and the deserted village has furnished a theme for the poet's song. The ancient tenant, finding no occupation in the fields where he has spent his youth, and not caring, as a mercenary, to plough that land which he formerly rented, forsakes his native shore, and seeks with his family another climate where his industry may be better requited. Other disadvantages may be numbered, that have flowed from this practice. Let it be remarked as an article of some moment, that the firm and independent spirit of a bold peasantry is better nourished among that rank of men by whom small farms are occupied, than

among servile labourers who perform the tasks of husbandry in larger farms *.

The country of Wafs, a district lying along the northern bank of the Scheld below Ghent (the scene antiently of wars between the Counts of Flanders and of Holland, and through which in later times the Prince of Parma, in the memorable siege of Antwerp, drew a canal that still remains), is the pride of Flanders in respect of culture and population. Yet the soil of the country of Wafs is in many parts ungrateful, and equals not in general the goodness of soil of other parts of Flanders: but, divided into slender heritages, and parcelled out into small farms that often do not exceed twenty acres, fertilized by rich manure, and subdued by the unceasing

* A learned and ingenious Englishman residing at Brussels, the Abbé Mann, whose studies have been long directed to the state of the Austrian Netherlands, has treated this argument of great and small farms, in Essays published in the Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Brussels.

labour of the peasant, who here, imitating the gardener's skill, applies the spade and the hoe, no less than the plough, to the culture of his narrow field, this district surpasses all the tracts of this fruitful region in the abundance of its crops. A vast population is found in this territory, whose villages are equal to large cities. St. Nicholas, and Lockeren, villages of the country of Wafs, contain each not less than 10,000 inhabitants.

The Province of Flanders, now so cultivated, wore antiently a far different aspect. The vast forest of the Ardennes, of which there are yet some slender remains here in the pleasant wood of Wynendale and other smaller woods, then overspread all that region: the first Counts of Flanders, on account of the deep forests that covered their domain, were named the Foresters of Flanders. Marshes also and stagnant waters abounded. A moist sky added to the

natural humidity of the soil ; and the Scheld and other rivers, as yet unrestrained by dykes, and keeping no certain bed, overflowed the level face of the country.

Agriculture and the art of man have wrought the mighty change that is now seen. The Monks, who in early times united rustic labour with contemplation and prayer, introduced the first rude tillage. Those fertile fields that surround the monastic houses were in their original state wild and savage tracts, that were cleared of their woods, and subdued to culture, by religious hands. The violence of a barbarous age respected the labour of holy men : feudal Lords beheld with surprize the effects of industry, and lands were bestowed on the monasteries, as the charters by which they are granted express, that they might be rendered fruitful by the skill of the Monks. The fathers of the convent, extending their lands and gaining new fields
from

from the wilderness, associated other hands in their toil ; and around the monastery rose frequent cottages, the habitations of labourers, the beginning of populous villages, and sometimes of flourishing cities*.

Agriculture

* The industry of the Monks in Flanders had begun in the seventh century. Among the Apostles of the Christian faith at that time in Flanders was St. Livin, a native of Scotland, whose memory Ghent still venerates, and who fell a martyr to his zeal in Holtham, now Hautheim, a district of Flanders not far from Ghent. The Latin verses of St. Livin still remain ; from which it appears that Holtham, which, in the antient language of Flanders as well as of England, signifies a woody dwelling, had at that time been improved by the labour of the Monks, and that fruitful fields had succeeded to the deep woods from which Holtham took its name. The verses of St. Livin are written from a solitude, into which he had retired from the rage of his persecutors, and where he was supplied with nourishment by the monastery of Ghent.

Gauda parat gremium, quo me fovet ubere læto,
Invitat, mulcet, nutrit, amat, refovet.

Hæc quoque dum scribo, properans agitator æveli
Munere nos solito pondere lassus edit :
Ruris delicias offert, cum lacte butyrum,
Ovæque, caseoli, plena canistra premunt.

The large possessions that were bestowed on the antient monastery of Ghent, the foundation of its noble cathedral

Agriculture thus introduced by the Monks, made a rapid progress as the yoke of feudal oppression became lighter, and as the Peasants acquired privileges, by which they were secured from the violence of their Lords. The cities of Flanders rising in trade and arts, afforded a great encouragement to agriculture. The Merchant, adventurous in commerce, by which he was enriched, exerted the same enterprising spirit in cultivation: the Nobles, that they might procure those luxuries which the commerce of the cities presented, turned their care to the improvement of their demesnes; and the Husbandman, who in the large consumption of crowded cities found a ready market for the produce of his fields, was tempted on that account to redouble

dedicated to St. Bavo, drew a great resort to that neighbourhood, and first advanced Ghent from an obscure village to a city of great note. St. Bavo, who possessed large estates in these parts, and who took the religious habit at Ghent, was a liberal benefactor to the monastery.

his

his industry. The Princes also beheld the progress of this useful art with peculiar favour; and the Counts of Flanders, as it is said, bestowed rewards on those who excelled in agriculture. Already in the twelfth century, the deep forests of Flanders were cut down, and the soil laid open to the rays of the sun: spacious canals were formed, which, whilst they drained the lands, opened the communication of the country. The Scheld, compelled to yield up fruitful fields that had long been hidden under his wave, was restrained by dykes, and obliged to keep a certain bed *. Flanders

* A double dyke restrains the Scheld not far from Bornhem in Flanders, where that river antiently overflowed a large tract, and where it appears evidently to have changed its bed. A lake, on whose bank is situated the antient castle of Bornhem, bears still the name of the Old Scheld, and marks the antient bed of the river, from which the Scheld now makes a great deviation. The rich fields named the Polders, adjacent to the lake, have been gained from the river, which in old times took its course through them. Not long ago the peasants, digging in the Polders, at some depth

ders became the most cultivated and most fertile domain of Europe ; and though she has since been imitated by other nations, her praise has not fallen. England, where tillage was so long in an imperfect state, and which took from this country lessons of husbandry as well as of other arts, far surpassing Flanders in commerce and manufactures, has not yet surpassed her in agriculture.

depth under the surface found a long galley of a singular construction, which, from the rude description of the peasants, has been conjectured to have been a Roman galley, or triremis : it is to be regretted that this galley was destroyed, before it had been examined by the learned in antiquities. In the same place were found medals of the Emperor Commodus, and statues of Jupiter in bronze : the statues were maimed, and appeared to have suffered violence from the hands of men. It is recorded that the Flemings, when they were converted to the Christian faith, broke the statues of the gods, and threw them into the Scheld.

Near the village of Bornhem, is situated a convent of English Monks of the Dominican order. The learned fathers of that convent, which was founded by Cardinal Howard, employ their leisure in the education of youth.

Liberty,

Liberty, which first animated the industry of the husbandman in these parts, still sustains his labours. The present Sovereign, by acts that add signal lustre to his reign, seeks to promote agriculture in other parts of his wide Empire, by the enfranchisement of the Peasants from that feudal bondage in which they have been long kept by the Nobles. A like attention has not been needed in this country, where the Peasant, no less than the Lord, possesses rights that may not be invaded with impunity, and where those feudal servitudes, that still disgrace some parts of this island, have been long unknown. Conscious of his privileges, the Flemish peasant resumes his toils, nor repines whilst the laws secure to him his property in that field which he cultivates. The season that renews his labours brings also along the appointed days of sport and recreation. A religion more indulgent to her votaries gladdens him with her returning

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ing holidays, that are accompanied by sports, and games, and exercises, consecrated by long usage. The Kerre-Messe, or festival of the Saint who is the patron of the parish-church, dissolves all the village in mirth and oblivion of care, and the jocund neighbourhood exhibits those festive scenes, which the pencil of the Flemish painter has so often sought to imitate. Restored by this remission of toil, the husbandman rises more vigorous to pursue his tasks, and the year is crowned with plenty by his redoubled activity.

All the various kinds of grain are cultivated happily in this country. Years of scarcity that affect other parts of Europe are little known here, where the crops of ordinary seasons yield a much larger store than the subsistence of the inhabitants, though numerous, requires, and where the exportation of grain to other countries less fortunate, forms a principal branch of commerce.

merce. The flax of Flanders not only supplies to that Province its chief manufacture, but yields also a profitable article of traffic with other nations. Many valuable plants adapted to various uses are raised with success: tobacco may be ranked among these plants: legumes and all the tribes of esculent roots grow in abundance, and have lent to England most of her vegetables of that class. Vines were formerly trained in Flanders and Brabant; but the vine, less grateful to the planter's care, has given way to products that are better suited to the clime and soil, and in which the husbandman finds a greater advantage.

Agriculture, whilst it supplies materials to commerce and manufacture, is also more permanent than either, and affords a more solid basis of national prosperity. The manufactures of Louvain have failed, and the trade of Antwerp is fallen; but the fields of Flanders keep a constant fertility. Agriculture also entertains a race of men, temperate,

perate, hardy, simple, that withstand the attacks of luxury, and among whom virtue lingers long, when corruption has gained the other ranks of the State. Even in the improved state which husbandry has attained in this island, England has still cause to make it a reproach to her inhabitants, that they have not enough respected agriculture, and that, intent on colonies and foreign possessions, they have neglected the due improvement of her soil, the best source of wealth. Hence, while a defective tillage is found in many places, and while in other parts vast tracts of ground are yet unsubdued by the plough, her natives have passed into foreign climes, where themselves with their industry have been lost to the parent country, or where, with impaired health, and too often with impaired virtue, they have acquired Indian gold, returning to advance the reign of luxury at home, and extend the corruption of a sliding age.

S E C.

SECTION IX.

THE Austrian Netherlands are bounded on the North by Holland.

That union, in which the Princes of Burgundy had joined the Provinces of the Low-Countries, having been dissolved by the arbitrary and impolitic conduct of Philip the Second, the republic of Holland arose; and inconsiderable in the beginning, with a rapid progress almost unparalleled in the history of nations, even in the midst of a fierce and obstinate war, attained a surprising height of greatness. When the republic, at the peace of Munster, settled the independence of her own States on a firm basis, she also availed herself of her successes in war, to subject to her domination a large part of the Catholic Provinces from which she was now separated, and whose fall had contributed

contributed so greatly to her own exaltation. Fortunate conjunctures since that time enabled her to maintain and improve the advantages which she gained over the Austrian Provinces at the peace of Munster.

The course of rivers, the Meuse and the Scheld, separates by a natural boundary Flanders and Brabant from the Provinces of Holland; but the power of Holland has passed this natural boundary. A large part of Brabant is possessed by Holland, together with the sovereignty of that long course of the Meuse which washes this Province on the East and the North. Many important cities are found in the Dutch Brabant; among others Bois-le-Duc, one of the four principal cities of the Province, named from those woods, the antient chace of the Dukes of Brabant, by which it was formerly surrounded; also Grave, and other cities on the Meuse, which were held of such account of old, that the Joyous Entry imposed

imposed an engagement on the Sovereign, to keep these cities, as far as it was possible, always united to his State of Brabant. Of Flanders a smaller part is under the dominion of the Republic, but not less important ; as that narrow tract which belongs to Holland, lying near the mouth of the Scheld, and forming on one side the shore of that river, while Zeland forms the opposite shore, has founded that title, of which Holland has availed herself to assume the sole navigation of the Scheld. A part also of Limburg, though entirely divided from the lands of the Republic, has been added to the sovereignty of Holland, which at the same time possessed herself of the strong city of Maestricht, situate on the borders of Limburg, though accounted among the cities of Brabant.

Whilst the Republic thus stretched her dominion over a part of these Provinces, she also obtained a singular prerogative in a

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part

part where she held no dominion—the prerogative of placing garrisons in many of their frontier-cities. Alarmed at the dangerous neighbourhood of France, Holland had very early seen the importance of keeping the Catholic Provinces, interposed between that kingdom and the Republic, as a bulwark to her own State against France; and, from her apprehension on that score, had been determined to lend a more ready succour to the Austrian Provinces, when they were invaded by Louis the Fourteenth. The alarm of Holland was increased, when the pretensions of the house of Bourbon to the succession of Spain, in consequence of the will of Charles the Second, left no longer any interval between the confines of France and the confines of the Republic; and that firm support which Holland gave to the grand alliance that was formed to oppose the pretensions of the family of Bourbon,

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was founded on her sense of the danger to which she would be exposed from this extension of the French Monarchy. At the treaty of Utrecht, the Republic fully unfolded the maxims by which her policy had been guided ; and that she might render the Austrian Netherlands a stronger rampart to her own State against France, by the barrier treaty concluded soon after, she imposed on them this condition, that certain cities on their southern frontier should be assigned as barrier-cities, a safeguard against the attacks of France, and that these cities should be garrisoned only by the troops of Holland. The Catholic Provinces felt it as a great degradation, that some of their principal cities were to be garrisoned by the troops of a foreign power, and of a power which had shewn so jealous a temper towards the Flemish States ; but their opposition was ineffectual against Holland seconded by the

powerful aid of England. Ypres, Menin, Tournay, Namur, and other cities, situated on the southern frontier of the Austrian Provinces, and forming a continued line of fortresses, were assigned as barrier-cities against France, and were occupied entirely by Dutch garrisons. A condition no less humiliating was added, that the expence of maintaining the garrisons of Holland in the barrier-cities should be defrayed by the Catholic States.

Fettered in their commerce, and excluded from their noblest rivers, restrained in their limits by Holland, and controuled also by her garrisons, the Austrian Provinces have borne with some impatience that depression in which they were kept by the Republic. The present Sovereign, willing to raise his States to their just importance, has sought, as far as is consistent with the faith of treaties, to render the domination of Holland less burdensome

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to his subjects, and to guard against her encroachments on these countries. The Dutch garrisons, that seemed to keep these Provinces in a kind of subjection, have evacuated the barrier-cities, and the Flemings are released from that appearance of servitude. In the war which Louis the Fifteenth waged in the Netherlands, these cities, ill defended by the Hollanders, were reduced by the arms of France, and the greatest part of them were dismantled before they were restored to their Sovereign. As the Republic had shewn no disposition to put these dismantled cities into a state of defence, and had not otherwise fulfilled the articles of the barrier-treaty, the Emperor thought himself no longer bound to continue the garrisons of Holland in places that were untenable in war, and has freed his country from a mark of subjection galling to an independent state. Holland had taken an opportunity

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tunity at various times to advance her frontier beyond the limits marked by treaty, and to usurp on the territory of the Austrian States, far removed from the eye of their Sovereign*. These encroachments have been restrained, and the forts which the Republic had built on the usurped ground in Flanders have been overthrown. That generous succour, which the Spanish Netherlands gave to Holland in the last century, in that moment of imminent danger when her State was invaded by the whole might of Louis the Fourteenth, and when England, under a monarch too careless of his own honour and of that of his people, was gained to the side of France, contributed greatly to save the Republic from entire destruction.

* In the country of Limburg, an ancient tree named, from the Dukes of Limburg, the Oak of the Duke, not many years ago marked the limit of the lands of the Republic. Holland had taken occasion by degrees to pass beyond that limit.

In

In a treaty concluded at that time between Spain and Holland, so lately hostile to each other, but now leagued against France, Holland expressed her gratitude for that seasonable succour, and by an important article engaged to yield up Maestricht to Spain, on the termination of the war with France ; an article which yet she took no care to fulfil, when the terror of the arms of Louis was withdrawn, and the performance of which, though often solicited, yet under various pretexts she always evaded. The Emperor sustaining the claims of his house, asserted his right to the city of Maestricht, and to certain districts in its neighbourhood, by virtue of that treaty ; yet willing to desist from these claims, on condition that the navigation of the Scheld should be opened to his Provinces. Holland, faithful to her system of holding in bondage the commerce of this country, has chosen

rather to make other sacrifices than to open the navigation of the Scheld. Maestricht has been redeemed at a vast price ; certain forts and districts have been ceded to the Catholic Provinces ; the Austrian dominion over the Scheld is extended to a greater distance below Antwerp ; Fort Lillo, yielded to the Emperor, marks no longer the bound of that sovereignty ; and thus those differences, which at one time threatened to bring on a contest by arms, have had their final issue in pacific arrangements. Amity is now renewed with Holland. From the present state of the Republic, which having held a splendid course appears now to have passed the point of her highest elevation, it is likely that she will content herself with the territory beyond the Meuse and the Scheld which she possesses, and that the Flemish States have little reason to be apprehensive of danger from her neighbourhood.

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On the South the Austrian Netherlands, in a long extent from the banks of the Moselle to the shores of the Ocean, are bounded by the kingdom of France.

France is not divided from the Low-Countries by any natural boundary. The house of Burgundy, when most flourishing, advanced its frontier into Picardy; and the river Somme, by which that country is watered, and on whose bank many strong cities are built, was the limit on that side of the empire of Charles the Bold. France took advantage of the death of that Prince, to repel that limit. Louis the Eleventh, King of France, the rival and enemy of Charles the Bold, delivered by the death of that prince from those disquietudes in which he had been kept during his life, hastened to enrich himself with the spoils of the house of Burgundy; and whilst he recovered Picardy, and seized on the Duchy of Burgundy so long dismembered

membered from France, sought also to advance his dominion into the Low-Countries. An occasion in that moment presented itself to France, of gaining the Netherlands, which she missed, and was never able to recall. Mary of Burgundy, the sole heiress of that rich house, was unmarried at the time of the death of her father Charles the Bold. This rich heiress, to whose nuptials many Princes aspired, was well inclined to a marriage with a Prince of the royal blood of France*; and that marriage, in the event, would have annexed the Low-Countries to the French Monarchy. Louis the Eleventh, though crafty and politic, lost that opportunity, either from the hatred which he entertained against the house of Burgundy, as some have said, and from the hope of subduing the Netherlands; or, as others have written, from the jealousy of his own

* The Count d'Angoulesme, father of Francis the First.
temper,

temper, which would not permit him to behold the exaltation even of a Prince of his blood without apprehension. Whilst France delayed to seize a favourable moment, the heiress of Burgundy married the Arch-Duke Maximilian. France repented of her error too late, and saw with regret a rival house enter into possession of those fair Provinces, that were so well situated to make a part of her own Monarchy. Hence that long animosity which she nourished against the house of Austria, and hence those frequent wars in which she so often directed her enterprises against the dominion of that family in the Low-Countries*.

The efforts of France to penetrate into the Provinces, which Austria had thus acquired, were for a long time attended with

† Louis the Fifteenth, when he viewed the Mausoleum of Charles the Bold and Mary of Burgundy at Bruges, is said to have exclaimed, "Voilà le Berceau de toutes nos Guerres!"

little success. Louis the Eleventh, who had flattered himself with the hope of making an easy conquest of the Netherlands, was not able to advance beyond the frontier. Francis the First found a formidable rival in Charles the Fifth, in whose favour he was constrained to renounce that title of homage, which he claimed as Sovereign Lord of Flanders. Henry the Second drew little advantage from his successes in the Low-Countries. The civil discord by which France was rent under Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Third, was artfully fomented by Philip the Second, that France might be the less able to profit from the troubles that were at that time kindled in the Netherlands. Henry the Fourth, master at length of his own kingdom, meditating to avenge himself of Spain, and to humble the power of Austria, was stabbed by the poignard of an assassin. Louis the Thirteenth, leagued with Holland against Spain,

Spain, had concerted to make a partition of the Catholic Netherlands between France and the Republic; but that partition took no effect.

The advancement of the empire of France into the Low-Countries was reserved for Louis the Fourteenth. That Prince, from the beginning of his reign, directed his enterprizes against the Netherlands; where his pretensions were so high, and his successes so brilliant, that they gave a deep alarm to Spain, and to many powerful States of Europe, who yet by their combined force were scarcely able to restrain his arms. The successive treaties of the Pyrenees, of Aix-la-Chapelle, of Nimeguen, still augmented the greatness of France by the accession of strong cities and fruitful districts of the Catholic Low-Countries. The whole Province of Artois; a large and flourishing tract of Flanders, containing Lille, almost the fairest city of
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the Netherlands, and Dunkirk, considerable by its port ; a portion of the territory of Haynault, of Namur, of Luxemburg; were taken into the French dominion, whilst Franche Comté, the last part of the Burgundies that remained to the house of Austria, was also united to the crown of France, from which it had been so long separated. The fame of Louis the Fourteenth, who now took the title of Great, filled all Europe : the skill of poets and orators was employed to celebrate his triumphs ; and his arrogance, nursed by flattery and success, displayed itself in violences and insults to the neighbouring nations *. The unjust and arbitrary proceedings

* Among the Princes who were at this time oppressed by the injustice of France, were the Dukes of Lorraine. Charles the Fifth, Duke of Lorraine, a gallant Prince, dispossessed of his States by the ambition of France, dedicated his services to the Emperor Leopold, who bestowed on him his sister in marriage ; and the house of Austria possessed no ally more faithful, nor general more brave,

ceedings of France after the treaty of Nimeguen stirred up against her a powerful confederacy ;

brave, than the Duke of Lorraine. This gallant Prince, after performing many eminent acts of valour, as he hastened to Vienna, being taken with a mortal illness at a village near Lintz in Austria, wrote the following pathetic letter to the Emperor : " Sacred Majesty ! according to your order, I set out from Inspruc, to repair to Vienna, but I am arrested here by a greater master. I go to render to him the account of a life which I had consecrated entirely to your service. Remember that I leave a wife who is of your family, children to whom I can bequeath no other legacy than my sword, and subjects that are in oppression."

The Peace of Ryswic restored Lorraine to the son of this brave Prince, the Duke Leopold, who applied his whole care to heal the wounds that war had inflicted on his State, to restore plenty, and to diffuse among his people a taste for arts, and science, and the pleasures of refined and elegant society. It was a saying of this excellent Prince, that when he could no longer promote the good of his subjects, he would resign his sovereignty. To Leopold succeeded his son Francis, Duke of Lorraine and Emperor, father of the present Emperor Joseph the Second, in whom the family of Austria-Lorraine begins, and to whom is allotted a wider sphere for the exercise of princely virtues than was given to his ancestors in the narrow State of Lorraine.

By a treaty concluded at Vienna between many Princes of Europe, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the antient possession of the illustrious house of Medicis, was bestowed

confederacy ; and England, now governed by a Prince who, born in the Netherlands, had opposed a gallant resistance to the ambition of Louis, acceded to that league ; yet the confederates could not boast of their successes in Flanders, and it was deemed an advantage, that the French Monarch, when he laid down his arms at the peace of Ryfwic, had not extended his empire farther into the Netherlands than at the peace of Nimeguen. While Louis was raised to this height of glory, the testament of the Spanish Monarch, Charles the Second, which destined the whole Spanish Netherlands to the house of Bourbon, seemed to complete his triumphs in the Low-Countries. But Fortune displayed here her usual inconstancy ;

bestowed upon the Duke Francis, afterwards Emperor, in exchange for Lorraine. Tuscany has been assigned as patrimony to the Arch-Duke Leopold, the second brother of the Emperor. Lorraine, now ceded to France, to whose Monarchy it makes an important accession, still keeps in memory the race of its antient Princes.

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and the Netherlands, that had been the theatre of the victories of this Prince in the early part of his reign, became now the scene of his disgraces. The grand alliance, which was formed against the house of Bourbon, and which was so much animated by the spirit of England, triumphed in many memorable battles over the armies of France. All that large portion of the Austrian Low-Country, with its strong and numerous cities, which had fallen under the dominion of France, was re-conquered, and the frontier of France itself was laid open to the invasion of its enemies. Louis sued for peace in vain on humiliating terms, and the Allies, now victorious, discovered in their turn as little moderation as the French Monarch had formerly shewn in his prosperity. A change in the English cabinet, and the disgrace of the Duke of Marlborough, saved France from that humiliation

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and danger with which she was threatened, and the issue of the war was more favourable to France than, in her distresses, she had reason to hope. The peace of Utrecht, which gave the Spanish Netherlands to the German branch of Austria, restored also to France the territory in the Catholic Low-Country, which she had possessed at the peace of Ryswic; and Louis the Fourteenth ended his reign, transmitting to his successor the fruit of his first victories in the Netherlands.

Louis the Fifteenth, of a more pacific character, permitted these Provinces to enjoy repose during a long part of his reign, till the accession of the Princess Maria Theresa to the throne of her ancestors, and that fair occasion which presented itself of despoiling the house of Austria of its possessions, awakened the ambition of that Prince, and drew again the French arms into the Catholic Netherlands.

therlands. Fortune then seemed willing, by a train of successes, to compensate to France the disgraces sustained in the former war: the combined powers that, opposing the house of Bourbon, had formerly gained so much glory in the plains of Ramillies, were now vanquished in their turn: the fatal field of Fontenoy witnessed the valour, but not the success, of the English troops; the Austrian Netherlands, mastered by the powerful genius of Marshal Saxe, were entirely reduced under the power of France, and were for some time held in subjection to that crown. But, whilst France was thus victorious in Flanders, Britain, the ally of Austria, triumphed in other parts by her naval power; and, at the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, France was constrained to restore her conquests, and to confine her dominion in the Catholic Low-Countries within those limits that were appointed by

the treaty of Utrecht, and by which it is still bounded. A strict league, cemented by the bands of affinity, has now for some time united the houses of France and Austria, and exhibits a new spectacle in Europe. While this amity lasts, the safety of these Provinces is assured against their most formidable neighbour ; but if those accidents that are perpetually changing the face of political affairs shall re-kindle the antient animosity, that for almost three centuries subsisted between these great houses, the Austrian Netherlands have still reason to apprehend an invasion from that powerful Monarchy, which keeps such strong armies stationed near their frontier, and which has so long regretted that she missed the opportunity of adding to her empire the inheritance of the house of Burgundy*.

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* Italy, no less than the Netherlands, has been the scene of the rivallship of Austria and France, contending for the

The Ocean which bounds the Austrian Netherlands on the West, separates them from England, the antient ally of this country, that was united in strict league with these States when they were governed by the Princes of Burgundy, and that has since, at the expence of much blood and treasure, maintained them to Austria against France. The services rendered to this country by the British nation, and the

the dominion of Naples and Milan, which in the sixteenth century were annexed to the Spanish Monarchy. By the treaty of Utrecht, the Spanish States in Italy, as well as in the Netherlands, were assigned to the German branch of Austria. The German line has not preserved this part of the Spanish succession so entire as the Netherlands. Whilst Louis the Fifteenth permitted the Austrian Low-Countries to enjoy repose, he carried his arms into Italy, where, aided by other powers, he transported the sovereignty of Naples and Sicily to a Prince of the house of Bourbon.

The Imperial dominions in Italy, detached, like the Netherlands, from the main body of the Austrian Empire, are now contained in Lombardy, in the Mantuan and Milanese. Another State in Lombardy prepares to obey an Austrian Prince. The marriage of the Arch-Duke Ferdinand, third brother of the Emperor, to the heiress of Modena, opens to that Prince the succession of the antient family of Este, so much celebrated by Ariosto.

valour of her troops, are not forgotten here; yet whilst the Flemings recollect the benefits that they derived from England, they sometimes accuse her of having supported too powerfully against them the interests of Holland, an ally that has not always proved her gratitude to the British State. The bands of that antient amity which subsisted between Austria and Britain, have been somewhat slackened, since the house of Austria entered into strict league with France. It may be questioned if the councils of Britain were guided by the soundest policy, when she formed that new alliance in Germany, which determined Austria to depart from the antient system, and to enter into intimate union with a power whose rivalry she had so long experienced. The neighbourhood of Britain, so often knit in friendship with this country, and removed beyond the sea, creates

creates little jealousy or apprehension in the Flemish States.

Whilst France and Holland advance their frontier into these countries, the principality of Liege, in its whole extent, lies intermingled with the Austrian Provinces. The country of Liege, inhabited by a warlike and turbulent people, that were trained to arms among woods and mountains, in old times waged frequent wars with Brabant, and the adjacent Provinces of the Low-Countries. Nourishing the same hostile spirit, when the Netherlands were united under the laws of the house of Burgundy, this country underwent from Charles the Bold a severe and memorable chastisement. Louis the Eleventh, King of France, the enemy of the house of Burgundy, whilst he professed to renew a league of amity with Charles the Bold, secretly stirred up the people of Liege, by his emissaries, to invade the dominions of that

Prince ; and that people, hostile to the Duke of Burgundy, though they had experienced his clemency, were soon roused to arms. The news of the invasion of his country was brought to Charles at Peronne, where Louis, not apprehending that his arts would so quickly have taken effect, had unwarily put himself into the power of the Duke. The impatient Duke of Burgundy, inflamed with rage, could with difficulty restrain the transports of his anger against Louis, and the castle of Peronne seemed destined to be fatal to the Kings of France *. At length turning his wrath against Liege, he led his army into that country, compelling Louis to accompany him, that he might be a witness of

* Philip de Commines, who possessed the confidence of Charles, is said at this time to have been gained by the King of France, and to have contributed not a little to turn aside the warm resentment of the Duke against Louis. Philip de Commines soon after quitted the service of the Duke of Burgundy, to enter into that of Louis, by whom he was largely recompensed.

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that severe and too cruel punishment which he now prepared to inflict. The city of Liege was taken by storm, and consumed by flames : of the inhabitants, a part were destroyed by the sword, or were drowned in the waves of the Meuse ; a larger part perished by famine in the woods where they had taken refuge ; the King of France being not only obliged to behold the miseries that befel this unfortunate city, but having been also constrained to join his arms to those of the Duke of Burgundy in reducing the place. The country of Liege seemed at this time about to fall under the dominion of the house of Burgundy, with the Provinces of the Netherlands among which it is situated. By the death of Charles the Bold, it was withdrawn from the subjection in which it was kept by that Prince ; but from that time the neighbourhood of Liege has ceased to disturb the repose of the Low-Countries.

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The State of Liege, under its Prince-Bishop, enjoys a mild government, bearing a near affinity to the adjacent Provinces of the Netherlands, as well in many parts of its constitution, as in that Walloon language which is here spoken. The support which this small principality, as a member of the Germanic body, derives from the Empire, assures its independence. The city of Liege flourishes by the industry and commerce of its inhabitants. The river Meuse, passing from Namur, waters this country, which in some parts exhibits rich and cultivated plains that do not yield in fertility to the adjoining lands of Brabant, in other parts presents the rude and mountainous scenes of the Ardennes, the antient chace of Charlemagne, among whose tracts rise those celebrated springs that invite the resort of strangers into the country of Liege.

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On the East these Provinces are bounded by Germany, in which the seat of empire, though remote, of their Sovereign is found*. In respect of Germany, the Netherlands have been often styled the Lower Germany; a name which is not improperly bestowed on them, as well in respect of their situation and language, as on account of the origin of their first inhabitants, who may be judged from the surest evidences to have been of German race. The natural relation, that subsisted between the Netherlands and Germany, became more intimate, when the sovereignty of the Low-Countries passed to the Princes of Austria. Maximilian, who espoused the

* The German States, Bohemia, Hungary, Transylvania, and the adjacent Provinces, form the main body of the Austrian Empire; wide and extensive countries, lying together in close union, that have not yet gained their full measure of strength, and which the genius of the reigning Sovereign promises to exalt to higher importance. The spacious and fruitful kingdom of Hungary presents a vast field for improvement.

heirefs of Burgundy, fought to strengthen this relation, by erecting the Low-Countries into a circle of the Empire, under the title of the Circle of Burgundy ; but this band of union has never taken complete effect. The neighbourhood of Germany, where their Sovereign holds so high a rank as the chief of the Empire, and possesses such powerful States, together with the splendor of his reign, and that consideration which he enjoys among Monarchs, adds to the security and importance of the Austrian Netherlands.

S E C.

SECTION X.

THE Roman Catholic Religion is established in the Flemish Provinces. The doctrines of the Reformers spread from Germany into these countries early in the beginning of the sixteenth century ; and the number of the Reformed increased so fast in Flanders and Brabant, that their zeal threatened to overthrow the antient worship, and inflamed those discontents, which drew on the revolt of the Low-Countries from Spain. But when a reconciliation took place between Philip the Second and this part of the Netherlands, it was agreed that the Roman Catholic religion should be established in all the Provinces that returned to the Spanish government. Since that time, the Catholic religion has kept quiet possession in these countries, the Reformed withdrawing themselves

themselves in great numbers into other parts, particularly into Holland, where their religion was triumphant.

The religion of the Austrian Netherlands seems to have taken no small tincture from the superstition of Spain, with which they had so long and so intimate an intercourse. Hence vain ceremonies, and pious observances, multiplied in those parts beyond the example of most Catholic countries: hence that veneration of saints and reliques, those holy brotherhoods, and religious processions, that so often croud the streets of the Flemish cities: hence also those narrow tenets in religion, and that weak credulity, that have taken such deep root here.

These Provinces, like other Catholic countries, possess their peculiar Saints, natives of those lands, that were distinguished by their pious acts, in the ages when the Christian faith was first planted. Flanders and Brabant boast of St. Bavo, St. Begga,
and

and the Holy Virgin St. Gudule, whose sanctity is so amply attested by the pious legends of Brabant, and to whom the principal church of Bruffels is dedicated. But St. Hubert is held in particular veneration in the Ardennes. St. Hubert, born of noble parents, was an idolater, and a hunter in the woods, when, as he pursued the game, a deer presented itself, between whose horns was planted a miraculous cross. Struck by this miracle, St. Hubert forsook the rude life of a hunter, and, embracing the Christian faith, became an eminent Apostle in the Ardennes. The festival of St. Hubert, precious to sportsmen, and consecrated to the chace, still recalls the delight that this Saint took in his first profession of a hunter. Neither has St. Hubert ceased to work miracles, and to lend his aid to those who suffer harm from the dog, his faithful companion in the chace. All who have the misfortune to be bit by a
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mad dog repair to the Ardennés and the Abbey of St. Hubert, and by their devotion to the Saint obtain, as it is said, a complete cure*.

Among the miracles which pompous shews and processions commemorate in the Flemish Provinces, is that remarkable miracle of the Holy Sacrament, as it is called, said to have been wrought in the fourteenth century. At that time the Jews of Brussels, as it is pretended, stole the consecrated host from the altar of St. Gudule, and, in despite

* If this be true, it may be thought that a lively faith, begot by superstition, is the most sovereign remedy that has yet been found against the bite of a mad dog, unless, perhaps, the regimen prescribed by the religious of St. Hubert be allowed to have some share in working this miracle.

Charles, Duke of Lower Lorraine, who founded the city of Brussels, transported thither the remains of St. Gudule from the village of Mortzell. This holy person had been first interred at the village of Ham. A lofty tree, which had overshadowed her sepulchre at Ham, piously followed her remains, as grave authors have written, to the village of Mortzell, where it took root, spreading its boughs over the new burial-place of the Saint. It is not mentioned whether this devout tree had also pursued the remains of the holy maid to the banks of the Senne.

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to the God of the Christians, wounded the Host with their poinards. The Host, assaulted by the poinard of the Infidels, shed drops of blood. A discovery of this sacrilege of the Jews, and of the miracles wrought by the consecrated Host, was made to the Priests of St. Gudule. The miraculous Host was brought back in triumph to the church of St. Gudule: the unhappy Jews were apprehended, and condemned to the flames, and suffered that cruel death at Brussels. By such absurd fictions did the Priests in antient times seek to calumniate the Jews, that they might the better entertain the superstition of the vulgar; and on such vain pretences were innocent men of the Jewish nation condemned to die by the avarice of Princes, who thus took occasion to seize on the wealth which they had acquired by their traffic. Instances of a like kind are not wanting in the history of the neighbouring nations. This

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pretended miracle is celebrated at Brussels by a yearly festival, which is honoured by the presence of the Court, of the Magistrates, and the principal Councils of the State. Even after a certain term of years a returning Jubilee adds greater pomp to this miracle, and the Flemish artists exhaust their skill in painting, and in tapestries, to adorn a festival, which is less a monument of the impiety of the Jews than of the arts of Priests, of the tyranny of Princes, and of the weak credulity of the Multitude. In the same age, in which the pretended violation of the Host drew this severe chastisement on the Jews at Brussels, many thousands of that unhappy people were condemned in the same country to perish by fire or the sword, on a vain accusation, that they had poisoned the fountains and spread the pestilence through Brabant. Though these idle fictions, that were greedily listened to in dark times, can

no longer gain credit, yet it would seem that even in the present age, and under mild governments, the Hebrew race, so inoffensive to society, are still destined to suffer oppression.

Amidst vain ceremonies, and observances, consecrated by long usage, a more enlarged spirit of religion insensibly diffuses itself through the Catholic Provinces. The separation from Spain has tended somewhat to repress the superstition which the narrow bigotry of that country had introduced. The influence of philosophy also, which in this age applies itself so happily to correct those errors that false religion had nourished, and to banish low superstition to the vulgar, has been felt in the Austrian Netherlands as in other parts of Europe. A more powerful cause now exerts itself here to illuminate the minds of men, and to restrain the excesses of bigotry and superstitious zeal. The present Sovereign has in

no respect displayed a more enlarged mind, than in the ordinances which he has enacted concerning religion ; and it is the peculiar praise of this enterprising and enlightened Monarch, that in the short term of years during which he has reigned, he has wrought improvements in the religious system in his States, to which the longest reign might scarcely have been thought sufficient.

The Flemish Provinces, by the compact with Philip the Second, had agreed that the Catholic religion should be maintained ; but whilst this security was stipulated for the antient worship, the intolerant and persecuting spirit of Spain was not adopted. That dark court of the Inquisition, whose erection had filled this country, accustomed to mild tribunals, with such just alarms, was for ever suppressed. No severities were exercised against the Protestant inhabitants ; and if they were excluded from the magistracy,

stracy, and from public offices of trust, they were not molested in their property or person, and the exercise of their worship in their private meetings was not obstructed. But the edicts of the present Sovereign have established toleration on a firmer basis, and extended it to a wider latitude. Whilst the Catholic religion is maintained, the Protestants are indulged here in the public exercise of their religion, and are admitted, no less than the Catholics, to hold public offices and employments. England now sees herself out-done in the article of religious toleration by a Catholic country. Whilst religious zeal in the British Isles still drives many of their gallant natives of the Catholic faith into exile, and compels them to seek, under the standards of a foreign Prince, those military honours which they are not admitted to share in the service of their own Sovereign, the Imperial armies are open to the reception of Protestant of-

ficers; and whilst fanatical tumults, disgracing our age and country, have withstood, and even defeated, the legislature of Britain in her efforts to extend to the Catholics a freer exercise of their religion, Protestant churches rise secure and unmolested in the Austrian Netherlands.

The power of the Pope, so dangerous to States and Princes in the Christian world, was always withstood by the free spirit of these countries. The antient constitution, jealous of the power of the Sovereign, had also guarded against the encroachments of the Holy See; and the tyranny of the Court of Rome did not afford so strong an argument, in these Provinces, as in most States, in the age of reformation, for departing from the antient religion. The Joyous Entry of Brabant permitted no causes to be transported from the spiritual courts of that Province to Rome: no papal mandate acquired force in that country, till it had
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been approved and subscribed by the Council of Brabant ; nor was it lawful to promulgate any bull or decree of the Pope, till it had obtained the sanction of that tribunal. But by the late edicts of the Emperor, the authority of the See of Rome is still more abridged in the Austrian Flanders. That power which the Holy See had acquired, of granting dispensations, and of collating to benefices, is now taken away, and the Pope exercises no other authority than that which belongs to him as the Supreme Head of the Catholic Religion, who regulates the rites and discipline of the Church. A Nuncio from the Court of Rome resides at Brussels, with a vain title to which no authority is annexed. The Roman Pontiff in this age has practised condescensions to the present Emperor, that have not been always shewn by his predecessors to former Emperors ; though these condescensions have not turned aside

an enlightened Prince from moderating those abuses which antient superstition had introduced into his States.

But a mighty reform in the article of religion, which has distinguished the reign of the present Sovereign, is the suppression of convents and monasteries. The monastic orders found their way at an early time into the Provinces of the Low-Countries. The blind piety of Princes and Nobles signalised itself here, as in other parts of Europe in the first ages of the church, by the foundation and endowment of convents. The family from which Charlemagne descended, fruitful of heroes, was also fruitful of saints, who were munificent in the endowment of religious houses, and of whom many embraced the monastic state in these convents which they had endowed. St. Begga and St. Gertrude, who are noted by the foundation of religious houses in these Provinces,

vinces, were Princeesses of that family. The Princes, and Nobles, of after-times, imitated this example, attaching a vain merit to the contemplative life, and hoping for an atonement for crimes from their liberality to monks and convents. The monks, on their part, did not fail to press into countries, which were noted for their early opulence; and the superstition of Spain still increased the number of religious, and added to those riches which they had acquired in earlier times. Thus by degrees all the monastic orders, of various name, and under various leaders, have gained a seat in the Austrian Netherlands, and abbies and monasteries have drawn to themselves a large part of the lands of these Provinces. A great number of citizens, of both sexes, have been withdrawn, from social life, to waste their days in a rigorous celibacy, and in the gloomy exercises of the cloister; and the labour of
a great

a great part of the community has been employed for the maintenance of persons, whose unprofitable leisure makes no increase to the public store.

The Sovereign has seen the disadvantages resulting to his States from the multitude of religious houses ; and the veneration in which the monastic order has been so long held, has not restrained him from applying a remedy, by suppressing a part of the convents. The sense of the States of the Provinces has agreed in this matter with the sense of the Sovereign, and in Brabant the Imperial edicts have been subscribed by the Council of Brabant. Of the religious houses founded in the Austrian Provinces, a great number, as well in the cities as in the country, are now dissolved. The rigid order of the Carthusians, most reclusive, and most abstracted from the world, has been entirely suppressed. The other convents that are
dissolved

dissolved have been taken indiscriminately among the other orders—Cistercians or Augustines, followers of St. Bernard or of St. Clara. The Carmelites, an order introduced by Albert and Isabella, and which traces back its origin to Mount Carmel in Palestine, have not obtained indulgence. The solitary hermits have been called to forsake their woods and rocks, and mingle with men.

This great reformation has been accomplished quietly, and without resistance. The voice of reason, long suppressed by false religion, has at length been heard; and the dissolution of monasteries, that in the sixteenth century could not be compassed in England without tumult and rebellion, is in this age effected in a Catholic country without violence or opposition. A just lenity has been observed in this reform; and whilst the religious, whose convents have been dissolved, are invited to
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enter into the world, monasteries are open for the reception of those among them, who, wedded to the monastic life, chuse to pass the remainder of their days in those observances to which they have been long accustomed. The religious of both sexes have for the most part entered again into the world. The Nuns of the Carmelite order, more attached to their profession, have passed into France, where the Princess Louisa, a daughter of France, has embraced that rigid order. Neither has the wealth of the suppressed convents been squandered away, as in England, by a profuse prince, or lavished on rapacious favourites. A part of the estates of the dissolved monasteries is set apart for the support of the religious who enter into the world, and for whom decent pensions are provided: the remainder is destined for public works beneficial to the State, of which some have been already marked out.

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The suppression of convents, which has as yet taken place, may be considered only as the beginning of a greater reformation that is intended. The convents that are suppressed are not the largest part of the religious houses, nor are they the most considerable for their wealth. No abbey has yet been dissolved: and, if the reformation proceeds, it is likely that the abbey will fall the last, as many of the Abbots in this country, like the mitred Abbots of old in England who sat in parliament, are entitled to a place in the Assembly of the States*.

* It may be remarked that, in the States of Brabant, the order of the Clergy is represented entirely by Abbots, the Prelates who sit in that Assembly possessing a place only on account of the abbeys that they hold. The Prelacy was not established in that Province when the States were constituted. The erection of bishoprics, and their endowment from the revenue of the Abbots, was a measure of Philip the Second, that raised much discontent, and was thought an infringement of the liberties of Brabant. It is remarkable also, that, in the States of Brabant, the first place in the order of the Nobles belongs to an Abbot, the Abbot of Gemblours, who possesses that rank not as Abbot, but as Count, of Gemblours.

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But the long reign of Monachism seems now in all parts of Europe to be drawing to a final period. The diffusion of science has prepared the overthrow of this institution, that owed its growth to ages of ignorance ; and the conduct of the Sovereign of these Provinces has set a fair example to the imitation of other Catholic Princes. Perhaps, in another century, the monastic orders will be sought for in vain in most parts of Europe, and will leave no other traces of themselves, than in these stately buildings which they once inhabited.

Whilst high applause is due to the Sovereign, who by the suppression of convents has rendered so great service to his States and to human kind, yet justice requires, that the merits of the religious orders in these lands should not be entirely forgotten. Let it be remembered that the Monks gave the first lessons of agriculture in this country, and that the rude wastes of
Flanders

Flanders were converted into fruitful fields by the labour of holy men. If too large a share of the lands has been allotted to convents and monasteries, yet let it be remarked, that the wealth of the religious houses has been employed chiefly in hospitable acts, in the encouragement of elegant arts, and in the construction of edifices that have adorned the country; whilst the farmer has found in the fathers of the convent, whose lands he rented, humane and indulgent landlords. The leisure of the cloister has not always been wasted in indolence: among the Monks in this country have been found men that were eminent in arts or letters; and the Abbots here, as formerly in England, have stood forth the advocates of the liberty of the people. It may be added also, that the lives of the religious have been for the most part without scandal, an example of severe virtue; and that if unwilling captives have been detained within

within the convent-walls, victims to the pride of families, yet sometimes the unhappy have found a suitable retreat in these mansions of prayer and meditation. This praise may be bestowed on Monachism before its final departure from these regions.

An institution of the religious kind, which took its rise in these Provinces, and is peculiar to them, is the institution of that female community named the Beguines. The Beguines dwell together in the same quarter of the city, wear the same simple habit, profess obedience to a superior, and dedicate a part of the day to devotion; but they seclude not themselves, like the Nuns, from the world, and they retain the liberty of quitting the profession of Beguines, and of entering into the married state when they think fit. The Beguines, when they are admitted into this community, are required to bring with them a small sum of money, and employ their leisure in needle-work
and

and other female occupations, so that their maintenance lays no burden upon the public. St. Begga, whose name is retained by the Beguines, is said to have founded this institution, which yields a respectable retreat to women that possess a slender income, or that may chance to be left without protector or guide. A great number of women in these lands take the profession of Beguines. A Beguinage is found in every great city, and, surrounded with walls, and laid out into neat streets and buildings, the dwellings of the Beguines, resembles itself a small city.

The religious foundations in this country, that are named Noble Chapters, yield an honourable station to unmarried ladies of noble birth, who possess not always a fortune suited to their rank. The Canoness (so the lady is named who enters into the Noble Chapter) must exhibit proofs of noble descent: her residence at the chapter

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impose

imposes no austere duties, and she is not excluded from partaking the innocent amusements of the world suitable to her birth. The revenue that this foundation yields, adds to the independence of her income when she is single; and she is at liberty to enter into the married state, and to resign the name and place of Canoness when she thinks proper. Perhaps some part of the pillage of the monasteries in England might have been more usefully employed in establishments of this sort, than in enriching rapacious courtiers. The Noble Chapter of Nivelles in Brabant was founded by St. Gertrude. The Lady of Nivelles (so the Abbess is named) possesses a large jurisdiction, and has been styled Princess of the Empire. The Noble Chapter of Andenne, situated amidst the pleasing and picturesque scenes on the banks of the Meuse, was founded by St. Begga. The city of Mons owed its first
greatness

greatness to the Noble Chapter instituted by St. Waldrude, of illustrious descent, and renowned for her pious acts in Haynault.

Valuable estates, or commanderies, as they are called, are possessed in this country by the Teutonic order, which, instituted in the time of the Crusades, by a fantastic alliance unites the profession of arms with that of religion. Men of noble families and of moderate income find a resource in embracing this order. The Knights of the Teutonic order are required to exhibit proofs of noble descent, are bound by vows of celibacy, and are besides required to have given proofs of valour by military service, before they can attain the emoluments of the order. The statutes of the order enjoin, that this military service shall be performed against the Infidels; but a dispensation is easily obtained in this article, and the Knight may be permitted to perform his noviciate in arms in the wars between Christian

States. Great Princes have held the place of Grand Master of the Teutonic Order; the ambition of a Prince of Brandenburg, in the sixteenth century, who seized a large part of the possessions of the Teutonic order of which he was Grand Master, laid the first foundation of the greatness of the Kings of Prussia. The Prince Maximilian, brother of the Emperor, and Elector of Cologne, whose States almost border on these Provinces, is at present Grand Master of the Teutonic Order.

SECTION XI.

LITERATURE and the sciences were cultivated at an early time in the Austrian Netherlands, and made quicker advances here than in the neighbouring countries. The Dukes of Burgundy were eminent protectors of literature, and by their encouragement forwarded the progress of letters. The antient library of these Princes, which still remains at Brussels, named the Library of Burgundy, contained a greater number of volumes than was to be found in that age in the libraries of most Kings. Among the earliest historians that flourished in Europe, are to be numbered the historians of this country, superior to the cotemporary writers of France and England; Froissart of Haynault, who in his native Walloon tongue has delineated so

happily, and with expressions so natural, the manners of the fourteenth century, when the Princes of Burgundy first entered into the Low-Countries; Monstrelet of Cambray, who has continued the chronicle of Froissart, cherished by the Dukes of Burgundy, and too partial, as has been thought, to that house whose patronage he enjoyed; Philip de Commines, so named from that city in Flanders, on the banks of the Lys, where he was born, who, in historical gravity and political wisdom, yields not to the renowned writers of antiquity, more worthy of praise, if he had not forsaken his master Charles Duke of Burgundy, to enter into the service of his enemy Louis the XIth. Under the first Austrian Princes, science still continued to adorn this country, and literary merit was not unrewarded. The Emperor Maximilian esteemed and encouraged learned men. Margaret of Savoy, the daughter of Maximilian

milian and Mary of Burgundy, who governed the Low-Countries for some time during the reign of her nephew Charles the Vth, was not only the protectress of learning, but was also distinguished by the elegance of her own genius*. Charles the Fifth, if he added not to his other great qualities the praise of literary accomplishments, yet gave a proof of the respect which he bore to letters, in advancing to the Papal throne Adrian his preceptor, a theologist of Louvain. Even amidst the convulsions of civil war, in the inauspicious reign of Philip the II^d, the light of

* This Princess in her tender years was betrothed to Charles the VIIIth, King of France; and that Prince having forsaken her for Anne of Bretagne, she was next betrothed to the Prince of Spain. In her voyage from the Low-Countries to Spain, a sudden tempest arising, the ship in which she sailed was in danger of being wrecked. The Princess is said to have composed this epitaph for herself in that moment of danger :

“Cy gist Margot, la gente demoiselle,

“Qu’eut deux maris, et s’imourut pucelle.”

After the death of the Prince of Spain, Margaret married the Duke of Savoy.

science was not extinguished here, and shone forth brightly during the more fortunate government of Albert and Isabella.

The fall of letters may be dated from the middle of the last century, when so many causes conspired to work the decline of these States. That train of disasters, which then overtook this country, depressing the spirits of the Flemings, tended also to enfeeble their genius. The government of Spain, under the last Austrian Princes, ill-directed in other respects to the public good, was negligent of letters, and, by that neglect, damped and discouraged all literary exertion*. The Spanish superstition, taking a deeper root, was also unfavourable to learning, and turned the mind aside from manly pursuits to vain and frivolous studies. At this period, while the neighbouring nations

* A Flemish Poet having been rewarded with a pension by Louis the XIVth, the Spanish Government required that the Poet should give up the pension, but had not the generosity to make any compensation to him for this sacrifice.

advanced

advanced so rapidly in the various parts of science, the literary efforts of these Provinces were few and feeble. A large work, entitled 'The Acts of the Saints,' and reciting in ample detail the holy exploits of all the Saints of the Romish Calendar, is cited among the brightest productions, at this time, of the Flemish genius. Of this stupendous work, begun by the learned Bolandus, whose name his successors in this task have retained, fifty huge volumes have already appeared, yet the work is unfinished.

The spirit of improvement, which has been gradually rising in this country under the German Princes, has extended its influence to literature. A taste for science diffuses itself: better and more liberal studies are pursued, and the literary genius that has long slumbered promises now to assume fresh vigour. The care of the Sovereign has conspired with the tranquillity

quillity of the times to encourage the progress of learning. Among other institutions by which the government has sought the advancement of letters, is to be mentioned the institution of the Royal Academy of Sciences and Belles Lettres at Brussels, erected in the reign of Maria Theresa. The Members of this learned Academy have already given proof of their talents and industry, by many ingenious treatises that embrace various interesting subjects, and exhibit no unfavourable idea of the progress of letters in this country. No complete history has yet appeared of the Flemish Provinces, which have been the theatre of such important events, and whose possession has been warmly contested by the greatest powers of Europe. A learned Member* of the Academy of Brussels, well known by his literary pro-

* Mr. Des Roches, Secretary of the Royal Academy of Sciences and Belles Lettres at Brussels.

ductions,

ductions, and by his profound acquaintance with the history of his country, has undertaken this task, and from his studies may be expected a valuable accession to literature. The Emperor disdains not to take the title of Protector of the Royal Academy of Brussels. Letters, that tend so much to ennoble and elevate the human mind, well deserve the protection of Sovereigns, whose reigns find often their greatest ornaments and most durable memorials in the writings of men of genius.

Among the elegant arts, the art of painting is that in which the natives of this country have made the happiest efforts. In painting, the Flemish school yields only to the Italian, and in some respects even emulates its fame: if the Italians excell in elegance and grace, the Flemish masters, in just imitation of nature, in expression, and in skill of colouring, dispute the prize. Bruges, Brussels, but above all Antwerp,
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are renowned by the eminent painters that have flourished in these cities. In Rubens, whose talents embraced all the branches of his art with so much force and facility, this country boasts of having possessed a rare and sublime genius. The delicate pencil and fancy of Vandyke, in some parts of composition, rivals or surpasses that of his master. Other painters of the Flemish school follow, whose works have gained deserved reputation, Crayer, Jordaens, Snayers, Janssens : nor must that artist of Antwerp be omitted, for whom Love wrought that miracle, and transformed the rude tools of the Blacksmith into the fine pencil of the Painter.

Connubialis Amor de Mulcibre fecit Apellem †.

The art of painting, like most of the other arts, is of antient date in this country, and had made advances under the Dukes of

† Quentin Massys.

Burgundy,

Burgundy, by whom its first professors were rewarded. The invention of painting in oil is due to John Van-Eyck, an artist of Bruges in the fifteenth century, who partook of the liberality of the Princes of Burgundy. Italy seized eagerly an invention that added a new brilliancy and permanence to colours. From that first dawning of genius, a continued succession of painters was carried on to that bright æra, when the celebrated masters of the Flemish school arose, and when this art reached here its greatest eminence, in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Neither was painting lost in that rude shock which the arts of this country encountered afterwards, and which proved so fatal to most of them. The last Kings of Spain of the Austrian line, remiss in more serious cares, encouraged this pleasing art; and their patronage may be thought to have extended its influence to the Low-Countries. Nor is
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the skill of the pencil now fallen into neglect here. Academies of painting subsist in most of the great cities, and painters are found, who, if they equal not the fame of the great masters of the Flemish school, yet exercise their talents with credit, and maintain the reputation that Flanders has acquired. Lins and Herreyhs may be mentioned as artists of note in the line of historical composition ‡.

In architecture and sculpture, though less eminent in these than in painting, this country yet displays monuments of antient skill that are entitled to respect. Nor are there now wanting able professors of these arts. Music is said to have been cultivated at the Court of the Dukes of Burgundy, and the names of Flemish masters are found among the earliest composers of music :

‡ The professors of this art in England, by their advances to excellence in late years, have made a grateful return to the protection with which they have been honoured by the Sovereign.

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but this art advanced not here beyond these first essays. Froissart applied himself to poetry, no less than to history; and France ranks this writer of Haynault among her early poets of the fourteenth century, an age not greatly favoured by the Muses. Some antient pieces, written in the Flemish tongue, are said to possess poetical merit. The distance at which these Provinces have been long removed from the residence of their Sovereigns, disadvantageous in other respects, may well be supposed to have been particularly prejudicial to the fine arts, that need to be cherished by the smiles of Princes.

The Flemish tongue, the general language of the Low-Countries, is, as well as the English tongue, to which it bears a great similitude, a branch of the antient Teutonic. The Flemish language is copious, bold, and energetic, but little refined into elegance or smoothness. It has been
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an obstacle to the improvement of this tongue, that for some ages past, since these Provinces passed under the sway of Austrian Princes, the language of the People has seldom been the language of the Court. The fall of letters also in this country, in the last century, when the neighbouring nations applied themselves to polish their respective tongues, was unfavourable to the advancement of this language. It is not now probable, that the Flemish tongue will reach a higher state of improvement in the Austrian Netherlands. The French language, which is the proper tongue of the Walloon Provinces, has made a rapid progress here in this century, particularly since the war that Louis the XVth waged against Maria Theresa, when the Austrian Provinces for some years were over-run by the armies of France. Not only in conversation, but also in writing, the language of France, softer and more elegant, but less

less nervous than that of the Flemings, has entered here into general use. In another century, it is likely that no other language than the French will be spoken in this country, and that the Flemish tongue will maintain itself only in the Provinces of Holland, where it has long subsisted in greater purity than in the Austrian Netherlands.

With the language of France, the customs and usages of that country have entered into the Austrian Flanders. The forms and fashions of the French in familiar life, their courtesy and style of society, their taste for shew and ornament, their amusements and entertainments, are imitated here. With the modes and fashions of France has also been introduced some share of that relaxation of manners, which often accompanies great refinement and politeness, and for which the austere will think, that the greater rudeness, but greater
Q purity,

purity, of simple times has been ill exchanged. The conquest of this country by Louis the Fifteenth, may be remarked as an æra that wrought the manners of these Provinces into a greater resemblance to those of France.

The Flemings have been remarked for their love of liberty, are tenacious of their rights, and conscious of the privileges that they possess: the Joyous Entry of Brabant is venerated by the people of that Province. According to the testimony of antient writers, supported by many proofs, the Saxons, noted for their love of liberty, were transported by Charlemagne in great numbers from the shores of the Baltic into Flanders and Brabant, and no small portion of their spirit seems to have been transfused to their Flemish descendants. Good faith and sincerity have been long noticed as a part of the character of the nation: the Cardinal Bentivoglio has remarked, that
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the fairness of the complexion of the natives corresponds to the candour of their minds ; nor are the manners of the people now changed in that respect. As the Flemings are situated between Holland and France, so they have been found in their works to unite the persevering temper of the Dutch with the sprightlier fancy of the French : the Walloons approach to the lively character of that nation on which they border. Amidst the advances of luxury, the antient frugality still exhibits itself here in many striking features : the fortunes that were acquired by antient commerce have not been dissipated, and have been transmitted in many instances, unimpaired, to the descendants of those families by which they were acquired. Good order and tranquillity prevail—not less the effect of sober manners, than of wise laws and good police *. Daring acts of

* In the Cities the police is entrusted to the Magistrates. An Officer, who is named the Provost-General, is charged

of violence seldom violate the general quiet, and the commission of great crimes is rare. A happy equality takes place. No rank of men is despised: the Peasant is esteemed in his station, and the Nobles are respected, without oppressing the lower ranks.

The Nobles in these Provinces possess their peculiar privileges, of which the most important have been noticed. Nobility descends here to a lower degree than among the English, and takes in those ranks which in England form only the first class of the Gentry, though no rank below that of a Baron gains admittance into the Assembly of the States. Many families here are of a

with the security of the highways and the open country. A company of Archers, of whom a part are horse, act under the command of this Officer. Vagrants are subjected to the authority of the Provost-General, but are to be judged by a special Tribunal erected for that purpose. This institution is due to the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Besides the Provost-General of all the Provinces, Brabant has also her own Provost-General commanding his company of Archers.

The weak police of England has long been made a reproach to her among the neighbouring nations.

very

very antient nobility, and count a long series of illustrious ancestors : the houses of Aremberg, of Ligne, of Merode, and other great houses, boast justly of the splendour of their pedigree ; but it is a disadvantage, that in this country nobility is exposed to sale, and may be purchased by money ; a bad traffic, which, while it adds only a small part to the revenue of the Sovereign, debases nobility, and assigns to gold the rewards that belong to merit. A law of Haynault has ordained, that persons who are ennobled in that Province shall not gain admittance into the States, unless their nobility has been obtained on account of services rendered to the country. It is remarkable, that, since the beginning of the last century, the Nobles of the Province of Flanders, by the usurpation of the two other orders, and by their own tame acquiescence, have lost the brightest ornament of nobility, and sit no longer in the Assembly of the States of that Province.

The jurisprudence of the Austrian Netherlands is guided in part by antient and unwritten customs, in part by the edicts of the Sovereign : where neither antient customs nor the edicts of the Prince have pronounced, recourse is had to the decisions of the civil law. The antient customs, that hold the place of laws, differ greatly in the different Provinces ; a circumstance not to be wondered at, when it is considered, that the Flemish Countries were antiently distinct States, governed by distinct Princes. Even in different districts of the same Province, the antient customs, that are regarded as laws, differ widely ; a consequence of the antient feudal system, and found also commonly enough in England, where distinct Manors govern themselves by distinct customs and usages.

Two customs, that are directly opposite, the custom of Valenciennes, and the custom of Mons, divide the Province of Haynault in the important article of the alienation of landed

landed property. By the custom of Valenciennes, it is permitted only to persons who are unmarried to alienate their lands: by the custom of Mons, they only who are married, and have children, enjoy the right of alienating their landed property. The Province of Haynault was antiently divided between the Courts of Mons and Valenciennes, and at that time arose these customs so opposite that obtain in these Provinces. The custom of Mons seems to be the best, which presumes that persons, who are married and have children, will not so rashly or imprudently alienate their property, as they who are unmarried. Though Valenciennes now belongs to France, yet a large part of the Austrian Haynault is guided by the custom of Valenciennes.

By the general custom of Brabant, as well as of most of the Flemish States, the inheritance, unless in the case of fiefs, is shared equally between the children; a wholesome law, that favours the natural

equality of men, and prevents the accumulation of large estates, so detrimental to a country *. It is also a commendable law,

* The lands of Grimberg, a fief in Brabant, that gives the title of Prince to a noble family, by a singular custom, pass to the younger son in exclusion of the eldest. This singular custom took its rise from that war between the Duke of Brabant and the Lord of Mechlin, of which some account has been given above. The lands of Grimberg antiently belonged to the Bertholds, Lords of Mechlin. Godfrey, Duke of Brabant, revenging the injury that had been offered to his States by the Lord of Mechlin, compelled Walter Berthold Lord of Mechlin, and Gerard his brother, to swear fealty to him, and kept the brothers in a state of obedience. Afterwards the elder brother, requesting to go as a warrior to the Holy Land, obtained permission from the Duke, only on this condition, that he should return within a limited time, and that his younger brother should remain as a hostage in his absence. The elder brother not returning according to his promise, and the younger brother dying while he was detained as a hostage, it was adjudged that, in memory of the wrong which the younger brother had thus sustained from the neglect of the elder, the lands of Grimberg should from that time pass to the younger son, in exclusion of the elder.

The Princes of the Low-Countries were not a little distinguished in the wars of the Holy Land. Godfrey of Bouillon, the hero of Tasso, and the leader of the Christians in the first Crusade, was a native of Brabant, and held the dignity of Duke of Lower Lorraine. The Flemings, led by the Counts of Flanders, made a nation apart in these wars, and

wore

law, by which persons who are given to waste and dissipation of their property, are restrained and limited to a certain part of their income, proportioned to their estate, when due proofs of their disposition to waste and profuseness have been brought before the Tribunals of the Province, by their children or nearest kindred.

By a particular custom in certain districts of Brabant, the children of the second bed are excluded from all share of the lands, which belong entirely to the children of the first bed. By virtue of this custom, Louis the Fourteenth, married to the Infanta Maria-Theresa, daughter of Philip the Fourth, King of Spain, by the first mar-

wore a green cross, while the English wore a white, and the French a red cross.

Seguia la gente poi candida e bionda,
 Che tra Franchi, & Germani, e'l mar si giace,
 Ove la Mosa e ove il Rheno inonda;
 Terra di Biade e d'animai ferace, &c.

The title of King of Jerusalem has descended from the heroes of the Crusades to the Emperor.

riage,

riage, asserted his title to the Spanish Netherlands, in opposition to Charles the Second, the son of Philip the Fourth by the second marriage ; and, on this weak ground, commenced that memorable invasion of the Spanish Low-Countries, which first inspired Europe with a jealousy of his ambition and power. The successes of France were rapid in this invasion, against which the weakness and slow counsels of Spain had prepared little defence. The Queen and all the Court of France accompanied the young Monarch in his campaign into Flanders—so that the rude operations of war wore the appearance of a party of pleasure. The triple league between England, Sweden, and Holland, the work of eminent Statesmen, Temple and De Witt, arrested Louis in his ambitious career ; but the conquests that he had made in the Low-Countries remained to France.

The

The criminal jurisdiction in the Cities of these Provinces belongs, as has been remarked, to the Magistrates of the Cities; a respectable tribunal, on which the citizens may safely rely. The tribunals in the Country, where the Magistrates of the Villages, named by the Lords in whose manors the villages are situated, exercise the criminal jurisdiction, are more liable to censure. In the appointment of the Village-Magistrates, too large a share of power may be thought to be committed to the Lords of Manors, successors of the feudal Barons. So important a charge, as that of judging in causes on which the lives of men depend, may seem also to be unwisely trusted to the Magistrates of Villages, even when they are aided by the two lettered Magistrates. A farther objection remains. As, in the prosecution of the criminal before these Village-Tribunals, the expence of the prosecution is to be defrayed by the Lord
to

whose manor the village belongs, it sometimes happens, that on that account justice is slackly administered, and that, by the willing neglect of the Lord, criminals are permitted to make their escape. The Nobles are vain of the honour of possessing this criminal jurisdiction, in which may be traced the remains, though much contracted, of feudal power.

The criminal laws of England, excellent in many respects, ordain, that all who are accused of crimes shall be tried in open court, and the constitution justly regards this mode of trial as essential to liberty. This advantage is wanting to these Provinces, where the Tribunals judge with shut doors. At Antwerp alone, whose laws and wise polity contributed to its antient greatness, the Citizens claim this right, that they are to be tried in open court; and this trial is there instituted with much solemnity.

The

The Lords, who in this country still retain the semblance of feudal power in the criminal jurisdiction, possess also, in their baronies or manors, most of the rights that are enjoyed by the Lords of Manors in England. These rights, in some instances, have been abridged by the laws of Brabant. As an example of this sort, it may be remarked, that by an article in the Joyous Entry of Brabant, in the fourteenth century, it is declared, that all the natives of that Province shall enjoy the privilege of hunting with hound and hawk through all the lands of Brabant, excepting only in the forests of the Prince, and in those manors, few in number, that had acquired the right of free warren before the beginning of that century ; an article which marks, among many others, the early influence which the Commons acquired in this Province, who were thus able to controul the feudal Barons in those amusements of which they were
the

the most jealous, the amusements of the chase. The same article extends also to all the natives of Brabant, the right of fishing in the river Senne, which passes through Brussels. The Brabanders have not failed, by the exercise of these rights, to maintain the possession of them.

The Sovereign still possesses large demesnes in the Austrian Netherlands; and the profits of the demesne lands, which antiently formed here, as in other parts of Europe, the largest part of the revenue of the Prince, still bring no inconsiderable accession to the treasury of the Sovereign. The laws of Brabant permit not the demesnes of the Prince in that Province to be alienated, without the consent of the States and Council of Brabant. The noble forest of Soignes, which approaches almost to Brussels, and which overspreads a tract of country that measures thirty miles in circuit, containing amidst its lofty woods
fruitful

fruitful fields, fair seats, and populous villages, belongs to the demesnes of the Prince in Brabant. In this forest, well suited to a princely residence, the Dukes of Brabant had their antient seat at the castle of Ter-vure, decayed and fallen into ruins within these few years past.

The military service of the feudal vassals gave way here, as in other countries of Europe, to a regular army, of which the first traces occur under Charles the Bold. The perpetual enmity which that Prince exercised with Louis the Eleventh, induced him to keep on foot a body of regular troops, that he might cover his frontier against the invasion of France, which began at that time to give the first example of a standing army, since imitated by other nations, and productive of such important consequences in Europe. The good order and discipline that Charles established in this body of regular troops, were suited to the martial genius
of

of that Prince, and were admired in that age. A subsidy is now paid by the States of the Provinces for maintaining a military force consisting of thirty thousand men.

The administration of the Austrian Netherlands is conducted chiefly by three Councils, whose seat is fixed at Bruffels—the Council of State, the Privy Council, and the Council of Finances ; an arrangement that was established by Charles the Fifth, and which has been found well adapted to the management of public affairs.

Since these Provinces have ceased to be the residence of the Sovereign, a Governor or Regent, by the appointment of the Prince, represents the Sovereign in the Austrian Netherlands. Though the authority of the Governor is limited by the Councils that have been named, yet splendid prerogatives are annexed to this charge. The Governor maintains the exterior pomp of a Sovereign in this country, and Ministers

sters from foreign Powers reside at the Court of Brussels. When the Walloon Provinces consented to a reconciliation with Spain, Philip the Second entered into an engagement, that the office of Regent, or Governor, in the Netherlands should be conferred only on Princes of the Blood of the Sovereign. This article has commonly been adhered to; and when a person of inferior rank has been raised to this dignity, a clause has been subjoined to the patent of his office, that he supplies that station only till the Sovereign shall depute a royal person of his own blood. The important charge of Regent has sometimes been bestowed on Princesses of the house of Austria; and their government has shewn, that they were not unequal to the trust reposed in them. The tranquillity and flourishing state of the Netherlands, under Charles the Fifth, was in a great measure due to the wise administration of the Austrian Princesses,

R

cesses, Margaret of Savoy and Mary of Hungary. The prudence and moderation of Margaret of Parma, in the reign of Philip the Second, had well nigh suppressed those tumults in the Low-Countries, that were kindled anew by the intemperate zeal of the Duke of Alva. The Archduchess Maria-Christina, sister of the Emperor, now holds the office of Regent of the Austrian Netherlands* : the Duke Albert, her husband, a Prince of the Electoral House of Saxony, is associated with her in this dignity.

* The Queen of France, the Queen of Naples, the Duchesses of Parma, are also sisters of the Emperor: the flourishing house of Austria-Lorraine spreads its sway and affinities over a large part of Europe.

SECTION XII.

A FORTUNATE marriage, and the law of succession in these Provinces, gave Flanders, Brabant, and Limburg to the house of Burgundy : Namur and Luxemburg were obtained by purchase : Haynault was acquired by a title less honourable and just ; and history presents an interesting relation in recording the misfortunes of the Princess Jacoba of Haynault.

Nature had bestowed her fairest gifts on this Princess—rare beauty, a sprightly and penetrating genius, with firmness and resolution beyond her sex ; and Fortune promised to her in her youth a brilliant destiny. Her father, William Count of Haynault, was also Count of Holland, Zeland, and Friesland. The only daughter of the Count of Haynault, and the heiress of his States,

Jacoba derived also no small lustre from the great families to which she was related. Her father was descended from the illustrious house of Bavaria* : her mother, Margaret of Burgundy, was the sister of John Duke of Burgundy, Count of Flanders and Artois, whose family, now seated in the Netherlands, began to acquire great consideration in these Provinces, and whose younger brother Antony had been called to reign in Brabant. But the ill fate of Jacoba had decreed, that in these great families, to which she was by blood so nearly related, she should find her most bitter enemies.

At the age of fifteen, Jacoba, while her father was yet alive, was married to the young Duke of Touraine, little advanced in years beyond herself, the second son of Charles the Sixth, King of France. By

* On account of her descent from this family, this Princess is often named by the Flemish writers Jacoba van Beyeren, Jacoba of Bavaria. By the French writers, whom the English copy, she is named Jacqueline.

this marriage, Fortune seemed to prepare for the Princess a high exaltation. In a few months after the marriage, the Duke of Touraine, by the death of his elder brother, became Dauphin, and the ambition of Jacoba was flattered with the prospect of sharing the throne of France. But this bright expectation soon vanished. The Dauphin, her husband, in the second year of his marriage was taken off by a sudden death, not without suspicion that poison had been secretly administered to him by his unnatural mother, Isabella of Bavaria, well known by her crimes in the history of France.

The death of this young Prince was the beginning of the misfortunes which Jacoba was destined to prove from marriage. The death of the Count of Haynault followed soon after that of the Dauphin, and Jacoba, by the death of her father, succeeded to his dominions of Haynault, Holland, Zeland,

and Friesland. The care of providing a suitable marriage for his daughter, a widow at so early an age, and the heiress of so many States, had engaged the thoughts of the Count of Haynault before his death; and he had recommended to her choice her kinsman the young Duke of Brabant, who was also sprung from the house of Burgundy, and whose dominions, bordering on Holland and Haynault, were so happily situated to be united with her own. Margaret of Burgundy, the mother of Jacoba, wishing the alliance with a Prince of her own house, solicited her daughter to comply with the last request of her father; and the Princess, at the age of eighteen, consented to give her hand to the Duke of Brabant. But this unhappy marriage, to which Jacoba had yielded more from deference to her parents, and from reasons of state, than from her own inclination, proved the principal cause of her misfortunes.

John

John Duke of Brabant, the son of Antony Duke of Brabant, who had been slain not long before, fighting in the fields of Agincourt against Henry the Fifth of England, was in the eighteenth year of his age at the time of his marriage; a prince of a narrow understanding, of a feeble constitution, and little suited to gain the affections of a princess of the sprightly character of Jacoba.

An occasion soon presented itself, that displayed the weakness of the Duke of Brabant, and the superior genius of the Princess. John of Bavaria, the uncle of Jacoba, a turbulent and ambitious prince, upon a vain title asserted his right to Holland and Haynault, and, seconded by a disaffected party in Holland, made so great a progress in that province, that it was found necessary to oppose him by arms. In that war, Jacoba, who possessed valour and martial prowess, of which examples in that age were not few among the softer sex, took the field at the

head of her troops of Haynault, and, by her undaunted spirit, animated them to signal acts of bravery; whilst the Duke of Brabant, by his unwarlike character, spread dejection among his troops of Brabant, and rendered the successes of the Princess fruitless, and of no effect. At length, that he might hide his shame, he drew his forces away from Holland, commanding Jacoba to follow him into Brabant; and an inglorious peace, upon disadvantageous terms, was concluded with John of Bavaria.

If Jacoba had reason to be displeased at the little ardour that the Duke had shewn in the defence of her dominions, his conduct afterwards tended still more to alienate her. Neglecting the Princess, he estranged himself from her company, pursuing mean pleasures, and yielding to the guidance of unworthy favourites. To the neglect of the Princess he added harshness and ill usage, dismissing from her person her women that
had

had accompanied her from Haynault, and in other instances treating her with contumely. The contempt that Jacoba had before entertained of her husband was now changed into resentment ; and, listening to her anger, she took the resolution of departing from her husband and from Brabant, and of retiring into her own country of Haynault.

Jacoba, in the full lustre of her beauty, had attained only her twentieth year when she withdrew herself from her husband. Inclined to the tenderness of love, and capable of feeling that passion in all its ardour, she had proved a severe disappointment in her union with the Duke of Brabant, and she now thought only of dissolving an union that had been to her so unhappy. A reason was not wanting in the nearness of blood between her and the Duke of Brabant ; and this reason had been thought so powerful an objection to the marriage, that the Pope
Martin

Martin the Fifth, who gave the permission to marry, had at one time, on account of the nearness of blood, revoked that dispensation, which he afterwards granted. While Jacoba sought to annul her marriage with the Duke of Brabant, she cast her eyes on a Prince who seemed more worthy of her affection.

Henry the Fifth, King of England, at this time waged those wars begun by Edward the Third, that were so fatal to France. The course of the war had led this Prince to the borders of the Low-Countries, and the frontier of Artois had been the scene of his splendid victory of Agincourt. Among the Princes and Nobles of England that attended Henry in this war, the Princess Jacoba had seen and distinguished the youngest brother of the King, Humphry Duke of Glocester, whose name is so well known in the English story; a prince at this time in the flower of his age, handsome,

some, sprightly, brave, and endowed with all those qualities that might gain the heart of the Princess. In an union with this accomplished Prince, Jacoba hoped that she might find that happiness, which she had sought in vain with the Duke of Brabant. The Duke of Gloucester, on his part, was neither insensible to the charms of Jacoba, nor unmoved by the prospect which opened itself to his ambition, in the possession of a Princess the sovereign of so many States. Thus mutually attracted, Jacoba and the Duke of Gloucester flattered themselves, that they might prevail upon the Pope to annul the former marriage of Jacoba with the Duke of Brabant; the more easily, that the Church was at this time rent by a schism, and that Pope Martin the Fifth found a competitor for the papal throne in Benedict the Thirteenth. But whilst the Duke and the Princess indulged the hope, that their marriage might be easily effected, a powerful

powerful obstacle to their union arose in the kinsman of Jacoba, the Duke of Burgundy.

Philip, Duke of Burgundy and Count of Flanders and Artois, had lately succeeded to these dominions by the death of his father John, slain at Montereau by the contrivance of the Dauphin of France, afterwards Charles the Seventh. Philip, possessed of eminent talents, nourished an ambitious mind, and, already master of ample domains in the Netherlands, sought to augment his power in that country. The fair inheritance of his kinswoman, the Princess of Haynault, presented an object to which the ambition of this Prince aspired; and he had studied to draw advantage to himself by fomenting troubles in her States. For this purpose he had formed a league with John of Bavaria, and had secretly aided him in his enterprises in Holland. As he indulged the hope that no progeny would
arise

arise from the bed of the Duke of Brabant, he had not been much moved by the marriage of Jacoba to that Prince, and he had afterwards heard with satisfaction of the variance that had taken place between that ill-assorted pair ; but he was greatly alarmed when he learned the new engagements that the Princess had formed with the Duke of Gloucester, and resolved to employ all his efforts to prevent their intended union. With this view, whilst he applied himself to oppose the suit of Jacoba to the Papal See, he also made warm representations against this marriage to King Henry and the English Court, where he justly possessed much influence. England had been indebted for a great part of her triumphs over France, to the aid of the house of Burgundy ; and her future successes in that war depended much on the assistance of that powerful house. The resentment that Philip had conceived against the Dauphin, on
account

account of the assassination of his father, now bound him in firm amity with England; and it was of much moment, that no just cause of offence should be given to this Prince, by which this band of union might be weakened. The influence which Philip possessed in the English Court was also augmented by his affinity to the Duke of Bedford, the second brother of the King, a brave and accomplished prince, to whom he had given his sister Anne in marriage.

But the opposition, though powerful, of the Duke of Burgundy did not hinder the Princess Jacoba and the Duke of Gloucester from the accomplishment of their purpose. The Princess passed over into England, where she was well entertained by the King and the English Court, and where she married the Duke of Gloucester. And that a papal sanction might not be wanting, a sentence was soon after procured from Benedict the Thirteenth, by which her former

former marriage was annulled, and her marriage with the Duke of Glocester was established. Fortune now seemed to smile on Jacoba, and with an amiable Prince she tasted a happiness that she had not before experienced. The Duke of Glocester took the title of Count of Haynault, Holland, and Zeland, and a large part of the Netherlands seemed destined to the sway of an English Prince. After some time, the Duke, accompanied by a body of English troops, passed over with the Princess into Haynault, to take possession of the dominions that he now claimed by the title of his marriage.

But the felicity of Jacoba was of no long duration, and she was soon to prove the ill effects of nuptials too precipitately contracted. The Duke of Burgundy, now full of resentment, inveighing severely against the light conduct of Jacoba, and complaining loudly of the wrong that was
done

done to the Duke of Brabant, joined his troops to those of that Prince, and a powerful army advanced into Haynault to oppose the Duke of Glocester. The force of the Duke of Glocester was not able to withstand the combined army of Burgundy and Brabant, and a slaughter was made of a great part of the English troops at Braine in Haynault. Letters of mutual accusation and defiance now passed between the Dukes of Burgundy and Glocester, and a day was appointed for the single combat of these Princes. Whilst by this defiance, which yet in the end took no effect, a suspension of arms is produced, the Duke of Glocester took that occasion of returning into England, that he might collect a larger force. The Princess had at first determined to accompany him thither; but, won by the prayers of the citizens of Mons, who gave solemn assurances that they would defend her during the absence of the Duke, she consented

consented to remain in Haynault, and to fix her abode at Mons. She had soon cause to repent of this too easy compliance. No sooner had the Duke of Glocester departed, than the Duke of Burgundy applied all his efforts to seduce the people of Haynault from their duty to their Sovereign, and in particular to gain the city of Mons. In this he succeeded too well; and the Princess, betrayed by the citizens of Mons, in whom she had trusted, and finding no succour from the Duke of Glocester, to whom she conveyed her griefs in a letter written from her "false and traitorous city of Mons*," as she styles that place, was compelled to surrender herself to the Duke of Burgundy, and was by him conducted a prisoner to his city of Ghent in Flanders.

The courage of Jacoba did not forsake her in this distress. Disguising herself in

* Monstrelet.

man's apparel, and passing through the streets of Ghent by night, she found means to escape into her Province of Holland, where she was gladly received by that party which remained faithful to her interests. Here she found herself at the head of numerous forces, and gave an overthrow to her disaffected subjects in that Province. The Duke of Burgundy, to whom John of Bavaria had now bequeathed his pretended right to the States of Jacoba, alarmed at the success of the Princess, advanced with his army into Holland. While Jacoba opposes a brave resistance to this Prince, the Duke of Gloucester solicits fresh succours in England, where he was retarded by many obstacles. Henry the Fifth was now dead, and the crowns of England and of France had descended to his infant son, Henry the Sixth, a prince born to an unhappy destiny ; and a troubled minority ushered in an unfortunate reign. Though the Duke of
Gloucester

Glocester was now advanced to a high rank, and possessed popular qualities, yet he found the English Court little disposed to support his pretensions in Haynault with warmth. The strife between the Dukes of Burgundy and Glocester had greatly interrupted the successes of England, in the war that she waged in France. The Duke of Bedford, knit in affinity with the Duke of Burgundy, and now appointed Regent in France, was solicitous that the whole force of England should be employed against that kingdom. The ambitious Beaufort, Bishop and afterwards Cardinal of Winchester, sought to thwart the views of the Duke of Glocester, from the hatred which he entertained against the Duke, and which did not terminate but with the life of that Prince. At length, after many delays, an English force was obtained, and, under the command of the Lord Fitzwalter, was sent into Holland, to the aid of the Princess of

Haynault. But this force was too weak to effect the intended purpose, and, soon after its landing on the shore of Holland, was attacked by the Duke of Burgundy, and after a sharp conflict overthrown, the Lord Fitzwalter escaping with difficulty to his ships.

The defeat of the English army was a severe disappointment to the hopes of Jacoba, and other disasters soon followed. The Duke of Burgundy failed not to improve his victory; and whilst he pursued with vigour his successes in arms, he also, by his arts and address, drew away the Provinces of Jacoba more and more from their Sovereign. Martin the Fifth, triumphant over his rival Benedict the Thirteenth, and obsequious to Philip, issued at the same time a bull, by which the marriage of Jacoba with the Duke of Gloucester was annulled, and her first marriage with the Duke of Brabant was confirmed: a severe clause

clause was added, by which the Princess was restrained from marrying the Duke of Gloucester, even if she should become a widow by the death of the Duke of Brabant; an event which, from the ill health of that Prince, seemed not far distant. But the blow that imprinted the deepest wound on the mind of Jacoba, was the inconstancy of the Duke of Gloucester. That Prince, from a compliance, as he pretended, with the counsels of his brother and the Duke of Bedford, but more from that unworthy passion which he entertained for Eleanor Cobham, whom he afterwards married, and whose pride wrought his shame, now declared his purpose of separating himself from the Princess of Haynault, and of yielding entire obedience to the mandate of Martin the Pope. Deserted by her subjects, forsaken by the ungrateful Duke of Gloucester, pressed by the armies of Philip, the unfortunate Jacoba, after many exertions

of a noble and valorous spirit, was obliged to yield to the Duke of Burgundy, and to submit to those harsh terms that he now prescribed. The tenor of these terms was such as sufficiently declared the secret ambition by which that Prince had been so long actuated. By the first article it was stipulated, that all the dominions of Jacoba were to be governed by Philip, who was to rule in them by the title of her Lieutenant. A second article not less rigorous was imposed on the Princess, now a widow by the death of the Duke of Brabant, that she should not be at liberty to contract any future marriage without the consent of the States of her Provinces, and of the Duke of Burgundy.

Jacoba had not exceeded her twenty-seventh year, when she was obliged to submit to these hard laws. Yielding now to her ill fortune, and divested of all authority in her Provinces, while she retained the
name

name of Sovereign, she retired into the country of Zeland, where a slender revenue was supplied by Philip to her expence. There, in those islands that are furrounded by the Scheld, where, dividing itself into many channels, it pours its waters into the ocean, she indulged those melancholy reflections which the misfortunes of her life suggested. Sometimes, in order to amuse her melancholy, she joined in the village-sports, and instituted exercises in archery, or in horsemanship. In these exercises, in which she excelled, and that were suited to her martial genius, she was well pleased to win the prize, and to be proclaimed Queen by the voice of the villagers. Thus she passed two years, her beauty as yet little impaired by time, or by the accidents of her life, when Love, that had wrought her so many distresses, surprised her again in her retirement, and prepared for her new misfortunes.

Among the Lords in Holland who had been the most adverse to the interests of Jacoba, and who on that account had been rewarded by Philip, was Francis Borselen, Lord of Martendyke. This nobleman possessed large estates in Zeland, and frequently made his abode in that province. His opposition to the interests of Jacoba had long kept him at a distance from that Princess, till an accident, that fortune threw in his way, and of which he profited, gained him an access to her acquaintance. Margaret of Burgundy, the mother of Jacoba, having sent to her daughter a present of a fine horse from Haynault; and Jacoba, from the extreme parsimony of the Duke of Burgundy, being unable to reward the person by whom the horse had been brought so liberally as she wished; Borselen, who had learnt her distress from a domestic, took occasion to present a large sum of money with so good a grace, that the Princess, touched

touched with his generous proceeding, forgot the prejudices which she had entertained against him, and gave orders that he should have free admittance to her company. A nearer acquaintance prepossessed her still more in favour of Borselen, who to a graceful person joined courtly and engaging manners. At length her inclination for this Nobleman, growing from the retirement in which she lived, and perhaps also from the hard restraints imposed upon her, became so strong, that, forgetting the disparity of rank, and the engagements by which she was fettered, she united herself with Borselen by a private marriage.

Philip, who had employed spies to watch the conduct of Jacoba, was no sooner apprised of this marriage, than he hastened to draw from it that advantage which it afforded to his ambition. While he was inwardly pleased, he affected violent indignation. Borselen by his command was apprehended,
and

and conveyed from Zeland to the Castle of Rupelmonde in Flanders, situated at the confluence of the Rupel and the Scheld. Here, aggravating the presumption of which this Nobleman had been guilty, with a view to alarm the Princess, he caused the report to be spread, that the life of Borfelen was to atone for his offence. The Princess of Haynault, apprehensive for the life of her husband, collected a small force in Zeland, and, having armed some vessels, sailed up the Scheld, with the hope of surprising Rupelmonde, and delivering her husband. When she approached to Rupelmonde, she learned that her design had been discovered, that a large force was assembled at Rupelmonde, and that Philip himself was in the Castle. Disappointed in her scheme, she next requested that she might be permitted, from her vessel, to speak with her cousin the Duke of Burgundy; and the Duke not declining the conference,

conference, she inquired earnestly of him, if her husband was yet alive. Philip, as if to remove her apprehensions, commanded that Borselen should be brought forth on the terrace that bordered the river; when the Princess, with the ardour that was natural to her, transported with joy at the sight of a person so dear, and forgetting that she gave herself into the power of the Duke, instantly sprang from her vessel upon the shore, and ran with eagerness to embrace her husband.

Philip had now obtained the advantage which he sought, and, detaining the Princess, wrought so powerfully on her fears for her husband, that, in order to purchase the life and liberty of Borselen, she consented to yield up to the Duke the entire Sovereignty of all her States and Dominions. So high a price did the ambition of the Duke require for the ransom of Borselen! Philip, having attained that object
to

to which he had long aspired, took possession of the States of Jacoba; and those Provinces, accustomed to his controul, and by his arts indisposed towards their Sovereign, submitted quietly to his government. In return for that ample concession which the Princess had made, he assigned to her certain estates in Holland and Zeland, which Jacoba, setting no bounds to her affection for her husband, bestowed in free gift on Borselen. This Nobleman was also created Count of Oostervant, and decorated with the order of the Golden Fleece, lately instituted by Philip.

Thus was acquired by Philip Duke of Burgundy, and by him transmitted to his descendants, the Province of Haynault, and with it the Provinces of Holland, Zeland, and Friesland. This Prince has been distinguished by the title of Philip the Good, an appellation to which he is in some degree entitled from the general mildness of

of his government : but impartial History will always reproach him with the wrongs done to the Countess of Haynault ; and his unkind and ungenerous treatment of this Princess, his kinswoman, and the unfair advantage that he drew from her errors in conduct, errors that merit great indulgence, imprint a deep and indelible stain on his memory.

Jacoba, who, in place of all her pompous titles, now bore only the title of Countess of Ostervant, passed into Zeland, to taste the pleasures of a humble station, in the company of a husband to whom she had given such proofs of entire affection. History has not spoken of her in her retreat, but it appears that her life did not last long beyond this period. She died at the age of thirty-six, and was buried in the tomb of the Counts of Holland. In her retirement, she had sometimes amused herself

herself in framing vases of earthen ware : many of these have been found in the lake that surrounded the Castle where she resided, and were long religiously kept by the people of the country, who named them the vases of the Lady Jacoba of Haynault.

S E C-

SECTION XIII.

IN the church of Notre-Dame in Bruges lie interred the remains of Charles the Bold, the last Duke of Burgundy. The history of Charles the Bold conveys an important lesson to the ambition of Princes. The greatness of the house of Burgundy, raised by the successive cares of three fortunate Princes his predecessors, had attained a high elevation when Charles began to reign; and temperate, magnanimous, and brave, this Prince possessed many of the virtues that belong to a Sovereign. But his good qualities were overpowered by an unbounded ambition, and the unconquerable love of arms, which precipitated him into undertakings rash and hazardous, that in the end wrought his own overthrow, and the calamity of his house and people.

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On the death of his father Philip the Good, Charles succeeded to the States of Burgundy, as well as to the dominions of Philip in the Netherlands. The Provinces of the Netherlands flourished at that time beyond all the countries of Europe in arts, in commerce, and in wealthy and populous cities. Philip had united almost all these Provinces under his command, and Charles now crowned that dominion by the accession of the Province of Gelderland. The wealth of his States, together with the vast treasures that had been accumulated by Philip his father, the most opulent Prince of his age, raised the power of Charles to an equality with that of the greatest Monarchs. His own personal qualities, and undaunted courage in war, added to the respect in which he was held among the Princes of Europe.

An early animosity had taken place between this Prince and Louis the Eleventh,

King

King of France. Charles, during the life of his father, and whilst he yet bore only the title of Count of Charolois, had carried his arms into France, where he had stirred up a dangerous war against Louis, and, at the battle of Mont-l'heri, waged against that Prince, contracted that love of war, which afterwards became his ruling passion. Since the death of his father, Charles had given proofs of the same hostile disposition towards Louis, and by his enterprises kept that monarch in constant alarm and inquietude. In Germany, the severe vengeance which Charles had inflicted on the city of Liege, had impressed the terror of his arms on the Princes of the Empire that were his neighbours; and the Emperor Frederic, though remote, was not without apprehensions from his warlike and ambitious spirit. In England, he was joined in league with Edward the Fourth, who now triumphing over the

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house of Lancaster, had advanced the house of York to the English throne. Edward, when driven from England by the Earl of Warwick, had sought an asylum in the States of the Duke: Charles had espoused Margaret of York, the sister of Edward, and, as a mark of respect for the English King, wore the order of the Garter; whilst Edward, in token of like amity, wore the order of the Duke, the Golden Fleece. The league that subsisted between these Princes tended to increase the apprehensions which Louis of France entertained from the power of Charles.

One only daughter, Mary of Burgundy, was the heiress of the dominions of the Duke; and that circumstance was artfully improved by Charles to the purposes of his ambition. Many Princes, drawn by the prospect of so rich a succession, aspired to the marriage of Mary of Burgundy; and Charles, holding the suitors of the Princess
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in suspense, or flattering them with hopes which he still delayed to fulfil, added to his own importance, and rendered many Sovereigns in Europe dependent upon him.

Elated with the greatness of his house, and with constant success, Charles, now in the sixth year of his reign, sought to decorate his family with a royal title. For this purpose, he solicited the Emperor Frederic to raise his States into a Kingdom, by the title of that antient Kingdom of Burgundy, of which a part was contained in his dominions. Frederic, gained by the hope which Charles gave of bestowing the Princess Mary in marriage on his son, the Archduke Maximilian, consented to his request, and Triers on the Moselle was appointed as the place where Charles was to be crowned King of Burgundy. The preparations for this august ceremony were made by the Duke with the magnificence suitable to his greatness: the sceptre, the crown richly

adorned with diamonds, the royal throne, were provided; and Charles, at the time appointed, made his entry into Triers with mighty pomp, and a splendid retinue. The Emperor also repaired to Triers, according to his promise, though the pomp of his appearance could not vie with the splendour of the Duke of Burgundy: but before the day arrived that had been fixed for this solemnity, Frederic suddenly withdrew from Triers, crossing the Moselle by night; apprehending, as some have said, that Charles sought to delude his son with the hope of a marriage, as he had deluded many Princes, or jealous, as others have written, lest the title of King should inspire still higher thoughts into the ambitious mind of the Duke.

Disappointed in the hope of adorning his house with royal dignity, Charles turned his whole thoughts to war and conquest, and revolved vast and magnificent ideas of empire

pire in his mind. Master of the Provinces of Gelderland and Holland, lying at the mouth of the Rhine, and having acquired the country of Ferette, lying also on the Rhine, in the higher part of its course not far from Switzerland, he thought of nothing less, than of ascending from Gelderland by that river, till he had taken into his dominion the long course of the Rhine, with the numerous cities and fortresses situated on its banks, from the borders of Switzerland as far as the ocean. As the Duchy of Lorraine made a separation of his States in the Netherlands from his Province of Burgundy, he meditated the conquest of Lorraine; and when that conquest was completed, he hoped to advance his arms southward, along the banks of the Rhone, till he had stretched his territory from the shores of Holland to the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea. Even the Alps did not bound the ambitious views of the Duke;

and he managed alliances with the Princes of Savoy and Milan, that he might the better, by their aid, carry his arms into Italy. The attainment of the Imperial dignity completed that mighty fabric of greatness which Charles had raised in imagination.

The competition between two Princes in Germany, for the Electorate of Cologne, furnished Charles with a pretext for carrying his arms to the Rhine. Espousing the cause of one of the competitors, he laid siege to the strong city of Nuys, situated on the Rhine, pretending that he fought to gain that city for the Prince whose cause he maintained, whilst in effect he hoped to hold it for his own advantage. But the secret ambition of Charles was well understood; and the siege of Nuys excited an alarm, that stirred up a powerful confederacy against him. Cologne, and other Imperial cities on the Rhine, foreseeing the
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yoke with which they were menaced, sent large succours to the besieged. Louis of France raised up enemies to Charles in the Swiss, who invaded his country of Burgundy, and in the Duke of Lorraine, who invaded his province of Luxemburg. The Emperor and Princes of Germany, already jealous of the designs of the Duke, were farther stimulated by Louis, and a vast army, composed of the troops of the Empire, advanced to the relief of Nuys. Charles, having wasted much time before this city, was at length, from this powerful opposition, compelled to abandon his enterprize, and to raise the siege.

The bad success on the Rhine did not discourage Charles from pursuing his ambitious schemes, and the conquest of Lorraine next engaged his attention. The State of Lorraine, lying on the borders of Luxemburg, was now governed by its Duke Reigner; a prince descended from an il-

lustrious house, that had held the sovereignty of that country with glory for some centuries. The invasion of Luxemburg by Reignier had irritated Charles, and he now fought at once to gratify his resentment and ambition in conquering Lorraine. Reignier, though a prince of a gallant spirit, found himself too weak to contend with the force of the Duke of Burgundy ; and he was now abandoned by the King of France, at whose sollicitation he had been induced to take up arms against Charles. Louis had concluded a treaty with the Duke of Burgundy, and, desirous to gain into his power the unfortunate, though perfidious, Count de St. Paul, who had taken refuge with Charles, and whom Charles, too negligent of his honour, yielded up, consented for that price to abandon his ally, the Duke of Lorraine. Nancy, the capital of Reignier, was besieged and taken : the country of Lorraine, subdued, was compelled to swear

swear fealty to the Duke of Burgundy ; and Reignier, an exile from his own dominions, was constrained to take refuge at the Court of the King of France, by whom he had been deserted.

By the acquisition of Lorraine, the dominions of Charles now extended, without interruption, from the shores of Holland to the banks of the Rhone ; and, lifted up by this good fortune, he was the more bent to pursue his plans of conquest. The terrors of Louis were redoubled by the rapid success of the Duke of Burgundy ; and he waited with extreme inquietude to know on what side that Prince was now to direct his arms, not daring openly to violate the league, yet determined to exert all his efforts secretly to retard the progress of Charles. The country of Switzerland borders on Burgundy. The Swiss, no less than the Duke of Lorraine, had incurred the resentment of Charles, having taken up
arms

arms against him at the solicitation of Louis, and invaded his province of Burgundy, whilst he laid siege to Nuys. In revenge of this injury, Charles now determined to carry his arms into Switzerland, to chastise the insolence of the Swifs, and to subdue a country by which his passage was opened to the Alps.

The small republic of the Swifs had taken its feeble beginning above a century before this period. Long the subjects of the house of Austria, whose Princes, under the title of Counts of Hapsburg, had their first seat in Switzerland, the Swifs had withdrawn themselves from obedience to their antient masters, and still held a conflict to maintain their independence. Pressed by the arms of the Austrian Princes, and inclosed by lakes and mountains, the Swifs were at this time an obscure people, little known beyond their own rude bounds, and their force seemed in no degree able to sustain
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a contest with that great Power by which they were now menaced. But, enured to war and hardships in that mountainous region, and animated with the love of liberty, they had acquired discipline in arms, and invincible courage ; and the invasion of this country by Charles was destined to raise the Swiss to renown, and to work the humiliation of the Duke of Burgundy.

The Swiss, hearing of the danger that threatened them, fought by humble messages to deprecate the wrath of Charles. They represented the poverty of their country, which, as they said, equalled not in value the bits of his horses and the spurs of his Knights. They offered to renounce all alliance with the King of France, and undertook to supply Charles constantly with a body of troops to aid him in all his wars. But these condescensions availed not with the haughty Duke, and the Swiss found that their only resource was in their arms.

Having

Having obtained a suspension of hostilities from the house of Austria, by the mediation of Louis, and having drawn together some succours from the neighbouring Imperial cities on the Rhine, they prepared themselves for a strong defence. Meantime, Charles advanced from Burgundy into Switzerland, followed by a powerful army, and displaying his magnificence in the rich furniture of his tents, in which were contained his costly plate, and his most precious jewels.

The first encounter of the Swiss with Charles was near the city of Granfon, not far from the lake of Neuf-Chatel. Charles had besieged and taken Granfon, and had stained his arms, as it is said, by acts of cruelty, when he was informed, that the Swiss were advancing through the mountains to give him battle. His Generals counselled him to wait for the coming of the Swiss in the open plain, where his horse
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and artillery could act with more advantage : but he despised this counsel, and led on his troops to encounter the enemy. Scarce were his first ranks engaged in the narrow passes between the mountains, when they were charged with vigour by the Swifs, and compelled to retreat hastily to the main army, which was yet in the plain. Their retreat, which bore the appearance of a flight, communicated terror to the main army. A general rout ensued ; and the Duke himself, struck with the same panic which had seized his troops, fled with precipitation. The camp of Charles, with its sumptuous furniture and rich plate, fell into the hands of the Swifs, whose happy simplicity knew not the value of that wealth which became their booty. A Swifs foldier then sold, for no higher a price than a florin, the precious diamond of the Duke of Burgundy, esteemed the
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most valuable in Europe, and long after the brightest jewel in the crown of France.

The defeat of Granfon was attended with little slaughter, as the Swifs possessed no cavalry, with which they could make a pursuit: but it gave a sensible wound to the military reputation of Charles, whose allies began already to waver in their friendship to him. The second battle was more fatal and bloody. Charles, who had retired to Laufanne, having soon assembled a powerful army, impatient to revenge the affront which his arms had sustained, advanced to besiege the city of Murat, situated by a lake of the same name. The Swifs, who had been reinforced by a body of German troops, raised by money that had been supplied by Louis, not declining the combat, advanced also to Murat, and presented themselves in order of battle. A conflict ensued, in which the army of Charles was again defeated,

comfited, and put to flight: but the Swifs had now prepared a body of cavalry, with which they were able to improve their victory, and eight thousand of the troops of the Duke of Burgundy were slain in the field, and in the flight. A chapel, that was erected near Murat, by the Swifs, on occasion of this victory, and in which were heaped the bones of the slain, still remains to record this remarkable triumph of the Swifs, which spread their fame through all Europe. The Duke of Lorraine fought on the side of the Swifs in the battle of Murat. This Prince, who had been coldly received at the Court of France, had passed into Germany, from whence he had hastened to Switzerland; and, fortunately arriving a few hours before the engagement began, partook with the Swifs the perils of a battle, from which he drew signal honour and advantage.

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The loss of two great battles in the space of little more than a month, wrought a violent effect on the mind of Charles, long accustomed to prosperous fortune. Retiring to his castle of La Riviere on the frontiers of Burgundy, he gave himself up entirely to chagrin, neglecting his dress, permitting his beard to grow, shunning all intercourse with men, and conversing only with his own dark and discontented thoughts. This savage and solitary humour, to which the Duke delivered himself for some weeks, gave a shock to his understanding, the effects of which were visible from this time to his death. Whilst Charles gave himself up to his discontent, the Duke of Lorraine, aided by the Swiss, who thus requited his services at the battle of Murat, entered into the country of Lorraine, and gained possession of Nancy. This intelligence conveyed to Charles, to whom time and medicine had

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now applied some remedy, roused him from that state of gloomy inaction in which he had remained so long, that, resuming his martial activity, he led his army into Lorraine, to oppose the progress of Reignier.

At the approach of Charles, the Duke of Lorraine retreated into Germany, that he might collect a larger force. The winter season was now in its severity, and the troops of Charles, exhausted by the fatigues of the campaign, stood in need of repose : but Charles, led on by his own impetuous character, determined, against the opinion of all his Generals, to besiege the city of Nancy. Whilst the fatigues of a siege are added to the former labours of his troops, Reignier, to whose aid the gold of France had not been wanting, returns into Lorraine with a numerous army composed of Swiss and Germans. The Generals of Charles now dissuaded him from trying a battle, representing that his army, harassed by fa-

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tigues,

tigues, and dispirited by defeats, was also much inferior to the army of Reignier ; but the obstinacy of Charles permitted him not to hearken to these counsels. In the moment when the two armies were about to engage, an Italian Nobleman, who commanded a party of horse in the service of Charles, and in whom that Prince greatly confided, gained by the gold of Louis, suddenly deserted with the troops under his command to the Duke of Lorraine. Charles, though astonished at this treachery, yet persisted in his purpose of coming to an engagement ; whilst the Swiss, whose honest nature detested all acts of perfidy, with a noble disdain refused to admit the Italian into their ranks, and compelled him to stand apart with his troops, till the battle was decided. When the armies engaged, the event of the conflict was no other than had been foreseen ; and the rashness of Charles, unfortunate to his army, was fatal to himself.

self. The arms of the Swifs were again victorious, and the triumph of the Duke of Lorraine was complete. Amidst the rout of the troops of Burgundy, the fate of Charles himself was for some time unknown; while some affirmed that he was slain in battle, and others reported that he had escaped unhurt from the field. At length, after some days, his body was found among the morasses, that were now congealed by the frost, his face frozen fast to the ice on the pool. He perished in the flight, slain, as it is said, by the weapons of German horsemen to whom his person was unknown.

Thus, amidst mighty schemes of empire, fell Charles the Bold, in the strength of his age, leaving the Princess his daughter, and his States, to prove many disasters after his death, the bad effects of his rash and ungoverned ambition. His body was interred with suitable pomp by the Duke of Lorraine

at Nancy, and afterwards from Nancy transported to Bruges in Flanders.

These two great families, in ages past so discordant, have in this century been united, and the blood of the contending Dukes of Burgundy and Lorraine is mingled in the veins of the Emperor, who now rules the Austrian Netherlands, and who, consulting more the good of his people, has fought, by the arts and improvements of peace, to advance the welfare of those States, on which his ancestor Charles the Bold, by his passion for war and conquest, drew a long train of calamities.

SECTION XIV.

THE reign of Albert and Isabella makes a remarkable æra in the History of the Austrian Netherlands, and many monuments in this country preserve the memory of these Princes.

Philip the Second, whose tyranny had caused the general defection in the Low-Countries, having regained those Provinces that were then styled the Spanish, and have since been named the Austrian Netherlands, appointed towards the end of his reign his kinsman, the Archduke Albert, brother to the Emperor Rodolph, to the regency of the reconciled Provinces. Albert filled that high station with ability, and gained the esteem, as well of the States that he governed, as of the Spanish Monarch. His civil administration was just, and he

conducted not without reputation that difficult war which Spain waged with Holland, now powerfully aided by the arms of England and of France : the taking of Calais, of Ardres, and of Amiens gave lustre to the military character of this Prince.

When Albert had possessed this dignity for some time, Philip took the resolution of bestowing in marriage on the Archduke his daughter the Infanta Isabella, and of ceding to these Princes the sovereignty of the Spanish Low-Countries. The desire of making a suitable establishment for the Princess his daughter had some share in prompting Philip to take this resolution ; but it was chiefly inspired by the hope, that the Provinces of Holland, alienated from Spain, might be conciliated to new Sovereigns, who came to reside in the Netherlands. An important condition was annexed to the resignation of Philip, that if no issue should spring from the marriage of
Albert

Albert and Isabella, the Low-Countries, after their decease, should return to the dominion of Spain. The cession made by Philip was signified to the States of the obeying Provinces, in that same palace at Brussels, in which Charles the Fifth had formerly made the abdication of his empire in favour of Philip. The Archduke, who had entered into the ecclesiastic order, and who had been raised to the rank of a Cardinal, quitted the ecclesiastic state, that he might marry the Infanta, and the espousals were solemnized at Madrid, though not till Philip the Third had succeeded to the throne of Spain by the death of his father.

By the translation of this sovereignty to Albert and Isabella, an important change was wrought in the Austrian Netherlands. These Provinces, which for almost a century and a half, since the death of Charles the Bold, had formed a part of a great

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Empire, were now disjoined from that Monarchy, and being erected into a distinct Principality, presented a faint image of their antient situation under the Dukes of Burgundy.

Albert and Isabella passed from Spain into the Low-Countries to take possession of their new dominions, and fixed their residence at Bruffels. The Archdukes, for so these Princes were styled, assumed, but with a vain title, the name of Sovereigns of the Netherlands. The Provinces of Holland were not induced by the cession of Philip to depart from their purpose of forming an independent State. Albert, who had acquired reputation in war during his regency, having tried in vain by acts of persuasion to win back the revolted Provinces, fought but with small success to reduce them by force of arms. The superior genius of Prince Maurice of Nassau triumphed over the Archduke in the battle of Newport. Ostend, besieged

besieged by Albert, gallantly defended by its garrison, and not surrendered till it was a heap of ruins, having engaged, like an important fortress of late, the attention of Europe for three years, yielded when taken less advantage to the besiegers, than it shewed the determined spirit which the love of liberty had inspired into the besieged. At length a truce of twelve years was concluded, and Holland obtained that advantage, of which too exact a parallel has been exhibited in the contest of America with Britain, that Spain, the antient Sovereign of Holland, renounced all authority over the revolted Provinces, and consented to treat with them as with an independent State.

Albert and Isabella continued to reign in that part of the Low-Countries which owned their sway, the Austrian Netherlands and the Province of Artois ; and their government was fortunate and beneficial to those countries. The Archduke possessed
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in a high degree the pacific virtues so conducive to the happiness of mankind ; and that repose which followed the truce with Holland, was happily employed to compose the state of Provinces that had been convulsed by a long war of forty years. The good laws of former Princes were restored : new ordinances were enacted beneficial to the state : the Perpetual Edict, a law of great respect in the Austrian Netherlands, was framed at this period : jurisprudence was placed on a firmer basis, and the tranquillity of the citizen better secured. Order, purity and gravity of manners prevailed at the Court of Albert and Isabella ; and the satisfaction which the people of these Provinces felt in beholding their Sovereigns among them, was heightened by the virtues of these Princes, and by the mildness and equity of their administration.

Science and literature also adorned this reign. Many men eminent for their learning

ing are numbered at this time in the Flemish Provinces, and the care of the Archdukes was happily applied to the advancement of science. Albert and Isabella, at Louvain, did not disdain to visit the school of Lipsius at the hour when that learned professor gave his public lecture: the unpremeditated discourse which Lipsius pronounced on this occasion still remains, fraught with erudition after the manner of those times, but well adapted to his illustrious hearers, and conveying instruction in no uncourtly style. Bentivoglio, whose elegant genius has adorned the History of the Low-Countries, resided as the Nuncio of the Pope at the Court of the Archdukes, and was cherished by those Princes, to whose virtues he has borne ample testimony. The reign of Albert and Isabella is also the æra, in which the elegant arts of this country attained to their highest perfection, the age of Rubens, of Vandyke, of Crayer, of Van-Veen. The
Archdukes

Archdukes honoured with many testimonies of their esteem those celebrated Painters, whose genius added so much honour to their country. Van-Veen, who had drawn the notice of Albert by the decoration of the triumphal arches which graced the entry of that Prince into Antwerp, was rewarded with honourable employments. This painter, the master of Rubens, was descended from an illustrious family in Brabant, and to skill in his own profession added the merit of an historian and poet. Rubens, who to his talents as an artist added political knowledge, and the accomplishments of a courtier, was employed as an ambassador in England, where he has left so many monuments of his genius as a painter. The particular respect which the unhappy Charles the First of England, an admirer and judge of the elegant arts, bore to Rubens, is well known. Eminent Sculptors and Architects also flourished at this time

time in Flanders, and were esteemed and rewarded by the Court of Bruffels.

Distinguished by the virtues of the Sovereigns, by many acts of public utility, and by the praise of arts and letters, the reign of Albert and Isabella has been long held in grateful remembrance in the countries that they governed. The comparison of the state of these Provinces under these Princes, and in the ensuing period, when, under the government of Spain, they fell with a quick and manifest decline, may perhaps also have added to the veneration that is paid to the memory of the Archdukes. Among the virtues of Albert and Isabella, their piety and religion have been highly celebrated ; but it may be remarked, that the weak superstition of Spain entered largely into their religious character. The piety of Albert and Isabella displayed itself in rich presents to shrines and altars, in the introduction of new monastic orders
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into a country already filled with Monks, in the foundation of convents on which were bestowed large sums, that were ill spared from the services of the State. Miracles obtained an easy belief with these Princes; and the miraculous image of our Lady of Halle in Brabant, celebrated by the pen of Lipsius, was honoured with their particular veneration. The relics are still shewn, which the Archduke, though a prince of undoubted courage, wore at the battle of Newport. The hermitages remain amidst the woods of Soigne, to which Isabella was accustomed to withdraw, and where she devoted no small part of her time to religious penitences and severities. From an opinion of sanctity annexed to the monastic order, Albert was interred at Brussels in the habit of a Franciscan Monk, and Isabella in the habit of a Sister of the order of St. Clare. The religious weakness of these Princes spread itself among their subjects;

jects ; and much of the superstition of this country may be justly traced back to the reign of Albert and Isabella.

Isabella survived the Archduke many years, and governed after his death with moderation and wisdom : the war renewed with Holland, and not more fortunately pursued, disturbed the public tranquillity. Isabella, though superstitious and weak in matters relating to religion, in other respects possessed firmness and vigour of mind : Bentivoglio has preserved the animated harangue which she delivered to the army before the battle of Newport. The ambition of Philip, her father, had once destined for this Princess a brighter crown than that of the Austrian Netherlands ; but France opposed her Salic law, and all the factions of that Kingdom agreed to treat the pretensions of Spain as chimerical and vain.

Albert and Isabella dying without issue, the Catholic Low-Countries, after they had
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been for thirty years separated from the government of Spain, fell back into her dominion, and have since continued to form a part of a great monarchy. In the war of the succession to the Spanish monarchy, the house of Bourbon, which claimed that succession by the will of the King of Spain, made a gift of the Spanish Low-Countries to the Prince of Bavaria, dispossessed of his own States by the Allies ; but that gift had little effect, and the Prince of Bavaria could not much avail himself of a title which he afterwards renounced at the treaty of Utrecht.

Would it conduce to the welfare of those Provinces, that they should compose a distinct principality, as formerly under Albert and Isabella, or are they more happily situated as a dependency on a great Empire ? This is a question that may admit plausible arguments on either side. On one hand it may be said, that States are the best governed,

ed, where the attention of the Sovereign is not distracted by the care of dominions too much extended or divided ; that the best laws will be framed where the Sovereign, residing in the countries which he governs, is well acquainted with the state of his people ; that arts and letters are found to flourish most under the immediate eye of royalty ; and of the truth of these assertions, no mean proof may be drawn from the reign of Albert and Isabella. It may be added, that the Flemish Provinces, though of no great extent, yet fruitful and populous, compose a respectable principality, and that, confederated with other powers, or united in a stricter tie, as the circle of Burgundy, with the Empire, they might sustain their independence against that great Monarchy, which, situated in their neighbourhood, threatens by its power to overwhelm them.

On the other hand it may be urged, that these Countries, in their present position, as forming a part of a great Empire, are maintained in all their privileges; that their prosperity as a State yields little to that of the most prosperous nations of Europe; and that, supported by the mighty power of Austria, they find the most effectual security against the formidable ambition of France. It may be added, that the present reign affords the example of a Prince, whose mind embraces all the parts of a vast empire, and who conducts with a firm hand the government of countries that are separated from each other by wide distances.

Arguments of this kind may be urged on either side of this question. An opinion has been entertained of late, that there was a likelihood that these Provinces might assume again that form which they took under Albert and Isabella. The report has been spread, that the Imperial Court had
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entertained the design of exchanging the Austrian Netherlands for Bavaria, and that the Flemish Provinces were to be erected into a kingdom for the Princes of Bavaria, whose house in antient times had so often rivalled the Austrian power in Germany. The measures taken by many Princes of the Empire have shewn, that they thought this report founded on no slight grounds. A cloud rests upon this important affair, through which it is not easy to penetrate ; and it may be deemed presumptuous to treat a subject that is involved in mystery, and concerning which popular rumour is now more silent. Happily situated under the mild Austrian government, the Flemish Provinces have no cause to desire to pass under another domination ; and the reasons must be judged to be weighty, that can induce the august possessor of the house of Austria to transfer this antient patrimony of his family to a race of Stranger-Princes.

SECTION XV.

A VAST dominion, composed of nations of different name, and in which many languages are spoken, obeys the Emperor Joseph the Second. The administration of an enlightened Sovereign has diffused its influence through all the parts of this great Empire. In Germany, in Bohemia, in Hungary, in Italy, many important acts and wise regulations have displayed the abilities of this Prince in the art of government, the activity of his genius, and his disposition to advance the welfare of his people.

The Austrian Netherlands, as has appeared in the course of these remarks, have been in no small degree indebted to the administration of this Sovereign, whether his care has been employed to raise these States to higher importance, and to give new energy
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to decayed arts and commerce, or to correct antient abuses, and suppress vain institutions that had been long revered by superstitious zeal.

But whilst an active Prince extends his views on all sides, through these Provinces, he respects that constitution which has been established through so many ages, and those privileges which his Flemish subjects regard as their birthright, and as the foundation of their security.

The government of Joseph the Second, beneficial to his own States, has also extended its influence into other countries, where the Sovereigns, imitating his example, have also exerted themselves to institute salutary reforms, to diffuse the mild spirit of toleration, and to correct the errors of weak superstition.

The eminent qualities displayed by this Monarch, in the few years which have elapsed since he ascended the throne, inspire

spire the confidence that the future part of his reign will be happily directed to promote the interests of his empire, and of humanity. A general tranquillity is now established in Europe, and gives leisure to Princes to bend their whole care to the government of their dominions. What an accession to the happiness of mankind, if philosophy, which has made such progress in this age, could engage Sovereigns to maintain this happy tranquillity, and to seek their chief glory in the improvement and just regulation of the States that are committed to their charge!

THE END.



